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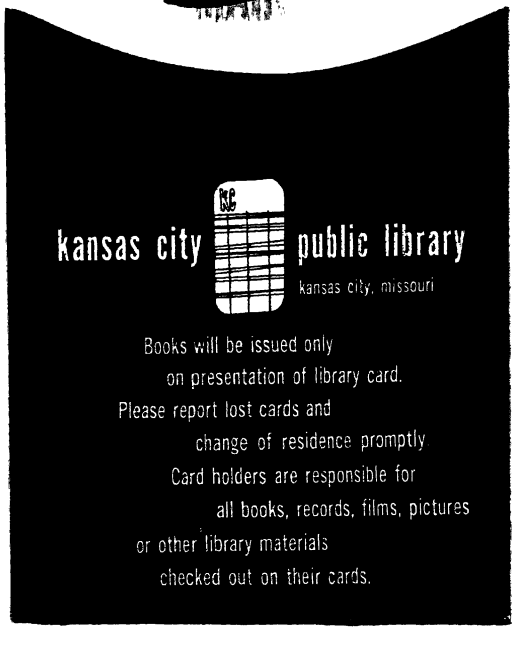
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John H. Tobe

HUNZA

Adventures in a LAND OF PARADISE

RODALE BOOKS, INC., *Emmaus, Penna.*

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HUNZA: Adventures in a Land of Paradise

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FOREWORD

Man lives on this earth in various types of societies, ranging from civilized to savage. Each society has certain advantages. Often we think of civilization as a synonym for perfection, but even the most civilized man can find things about primitive peoples that are attractive to him—life in the outdoors, habits of dress or social customs. In fact, man has found that civilization is a mixed blessing. Many of the greatest problems facing the world today are caused directly by our high state of civilization and the drives it creates. The supreme savagery of the hydrogen bomb, for example, makes the wildest headhunter look like a small-time juvenile delinquent. And that same headhunter is likely to be largely free of the cancer, heart trouble and other degenerative diseases that are so common in civilized communities.

At times, man has sought to escape the tangled web

of the problems thrust on him by civilization, by adopting a more primitive life. A business executive, for example, will work all year in an office forty floors above the street in order to earn enough money to spend a few weeks in the summer at an isolated fishing lodge deep in the wilderness. Even the desire to "move out in the country" is essentially an attempt to escape the confines of civilization in its most highly developed forms. Man wears the mantle of civilization uneasily.

I am making all these generalizations about civilization in order to set the scene for a book about the Hunzans, a race of people who have achieved civilization without relinquishing the most treasured benefits of a primitive life. In fact, it might even be said that the Hunzans have developed a way of life combining the soundest aspects of civilization with those features of primitive life which prevent them from becoming prey to the weaknesses created by civilization. How they achieved this masterpiece of compromise is a story that has attracted more and more attention, as we city dwellers have become more and more disillusioned with our sophisticated way of life.

The Hunzans live in an isolated valley in Kashmir—a valley so hard to get to that transport by truck, plane or even helicopter is out of the question. That isolation is one secret of their success. It has made them self-sufficient, dependent on no one. In that valley they have a mineral-rich soil whose strength is continually replenished by silt ground off the mountainsides by nearby glaciers. Almost everyone in Hunza works hard to get the most out of what raw materials they have—and that industriousness is another secret of their success. There is little crime in Hunza, no record of degenerative diseases and a high rate of literacy. The people have the feeling of satisfaction that all free, hard-working people have.

Because Hunza is so isolated, its story has been told only in bits and fragments. Travelers on the ancient caravan route from India to Tibet have brought out stories about Hunza, and a few intrepid tourists from the West have managed to get to Hunza. What has emerged is a patchwork account of a society that deserves careful and comprehensive scrutiny. The lessons that the Hunzans can teach us are so important that they should not be presented in haphazard fashion.

John Tobe has been interested in the Hunzans for a number of years, and he has felt the need for more exact information about them as keenly as anyone. The Hunzans are organic farmers—using only natural fertilizers—and so is John Tobe. That is where the interest started. But John has become increasingly concerned with the relation between diet and health, and the Hunzans provide plenty of material for study in that area. Locked away in their mountain valley, the Hunzans have not been able to get the modern sweets or "convenience foods" that have caused physical degeneration in primitive and civilized peoples all over the world. Sufficient only to themselves, they provide an excellent group for study and observation.

Most people will read John Tobe's book with the purpose of finding ways to use Hunzan habits to enrich their own lives. This is a most admirable goal, and it should prove quite easy for the average reader to find one or more aspects of Hunzan life to adopt and use. You may want to adopt some part of the Hunzan diet, or follow their example in using their feet as a major means of locomotion. Perhaps the greatest lesson that the Hunzans can teach, though, is that it is possible for a hard-working person to create a happy and serene life for himself.

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CHAPTER 1

Adventurers — Born or Made?

CLIMBING, TWISTING, TURNING, going up, up, up continually . . . my legs were beginning to feel the pull . . . and with every turn we completed, I was ready to breathe a sigh of relief and say, "Thank goodness, we've reached the summit!" . . . and we could start down again, I hoped. But this hope didn't seem to materialize.

Suddenly, as we made the sweep to the left, we were upon it! We stopped dead in our tracks! We had to! We looked down and across and to the right. We stood at the brink, at the brink of what, I didn't know. That abyss, that seemingly bottomless pit, had been our trail.

I looked down at the raging Hunza River. My eyes moved upwards along the mass of debris till they came to the place where the trail disappeared. I looked across to the other side and safety and continuance of the road to Hunza. I looked up — up — up — up at the massive solid sheet of black rock. The ledge of the mountain,

which had been our trail, had simply fallen or given way and no longer existed.

I looked at Cec. Cec looked at me. To the left was a towering cliff—2,000, 2,500 or 3,000 feet above us, and likely much higher, I don't know! To the right, way below us, was the Hunza River.

The ledge we were standing on was probably 3 feet wide and there a few feet below us was the peak of a moraine pile, all that was left of our road. The pile angled down steeply until the edge of it reached the bank of the river about 1,000 feet below. It might have been more and it might have been less—don't quibble with me!

What were we to do?

There was a sort of solution that came to me quite readily. We could go back down to Ganesh and there cross the vine bridge. But, horror of horrors, crossing a vine bridge is almost like crossing Niagara Falls on a tightrope!

Besides, you couldn't get animals across and that would mean carrying our packs on our back from there on. On a vine bridge you need both hands and feet free and unburdened and, even then, they'd best be strong, firm and nimble, for there is no floor on which to walk. You take a twist of vine or a piece of limb or plank at a stride and you hang on tight with your hands—for dear life! Your foot may slip or the limb or plank may work its way out or break and then the grip of your hands is your hold on life. The catapulting, foaming Hunza River 50 feet below, would quickly take you in tow if you were so careless as to slip between the rungs of the vine bridge. For me, that deal was out!

There dejectedly we stood! I must have looked bewildered. In fact, I was bewildered.

I'm sure I would have recognized this massive cliff

even if there were no other telltale signs because it reached so far into the firmament that it completely outstretched anything close by.

Long before I ever went to Hunza I'd read of Chaichar Parri. But I had regarded it like most of us do the South Pole . . . a sort of rough, tough, grim place but, thank goodness, one I'd never encounter. I had learned that this specific spot was hardly ever free of movement of some kind or other . . . winds, slides, blasts, rolling boulders. Further, I knew that it was about 6 miles before Chalt.

Then I thought to myself, "Tobe, you silly old coot, what are you doing here, 12,000 or 13,000 feet above sea level on the ledge of a mountain with a friend, two guides, two bearers, two ponies and a laden donkey?

"That's right, fella, what are you doing here in the heart of the Karakorums, midst the mightiest concentration of mountains to be found anywhere in the world, including the Himalayas and the Hindu Kush? Nowhere else in the world can they boast of more than 100 peaks over 20,000 feet high, 60 peaks over 22,000 feet high and 33 peaks over 24,000 feet high within a radius of less than 100 miles . . . and this goes for Tibet, too. What's more, many of these peaks are still unnamed.

"Why, back home you're only a small time nurseryman with a farm and a greenhouse, a tractor, some implements and a dozen or so loyal employees. Why didn't you stay home and mind your own business? What right have you got climbing up here on the roof of the world sticking your nose into the affairs of mountaineers and explorers? What stupidity brought you out here? Why didn't you stay put and be content to wallow about in your own little comfy puddle?"

At this leering, sneering reprimand, the little spark

of manhood that still remained within me burst into flame: "What do you mean what business do I have being out here on the roof of the world? Do you think that adventure was only made for Haliburton, that mountain climbing and the Himalayas were only created for Hillary, that attaining the poles was only for men like Scott and Perry? Must it be that only Livingstones can go to Africa and Cooks can chart new islands? What about Tom, Dick and Harry? Have they no right to dreams or hopes or illusions? You mean, because I'm an ordinary guy, I have no rights or privileges and I must content myself only with reading and hearing about these adventures? You mean I must stay home and keep my 'tootsies' in the oven and toast them? Well, maybe that's what you say but I don't agree!

"Sure, I may fall over this cliff. A landslide may carry me away with it. Sure, I know that many men have lost their lives. So what? They lived, didn't they, and had their day? And I want to live and have my day, too. And if it costs money, so what? I'm willing to admit that I used money from my business that actually wasn't even my own. I didn't have that kind of money to spare to take this trip. But, by the fates, for this trip I gave up a host of necessities, good clothes, parties, costly entertainment and yes, skimped and saved, to boot! If that doesn't entitle me to a crack at adventuring, then life must indeed be a futile business.

"Right here and now I want to tell you straight and true that I have no special qualifications for this type of undertaking. When I started on this journey I didn't know which end of a horse to get on. I didn't know a rock fault from rock salt or a pith helmet from pith. I didn't know a cordillera from an accordion or moraine from terrain. But by the heavens, I'll learn

awfully quick because it's learn now or perhaps die. (And I learned in a hurry that you can't afford to make the same mistake twice!)

"Sure, I'm scared to death of lofty heights! Sure, I'm worried! Of course I'm concerned about my life and well-being but I don't show it outwardly. I hold it tight within my breast. Don't I know I'm no Hillary or Shipton? But even a cat can look at a king. I can try to emulate someone who has gone before. If a man can't do that, what is there left for him but desolation, disuse and dry rot? What's more, I've come out here with the pennies I've pinched, with the dollars I didn't spend on smoking and drinking. This trip cost me a new car that I need quite badly.

"But I'm not sorry—I have no regrets. I'd give up two or three cars, I'd give up most anything to take this trip. So here I am and I'm going to go on and reach my destination and come back safely, if God is willing!

"If I haven't the guts and the courage to do it for myself, then I'll do it for those many Joes throughout the world who would like to do the thing I am doing. I want to show them and tell them that it can be done and you don't have to be a millionaire and you don't have to have the courage of a lion or the guts of a champion. You can be a plain ordinary guy who is not even rich and take this kind of a trip or a better one if you make up your mind to do it and are willing to give up a few other things—small things mostly."

"If you are so fearful of heights, then why are you here? Surely you knew that the Himalayas, Karakorums and the Pamirs meant the greatest heights known in the world. Again I say, why are you here?"

"Only because a man has to live with himself more than with anyone else, and in order to live with myself

I had to justify my existence. I have thousands of times quoted the famous words of Voltaire—'A man has time to do or can do everything that he wants to do.' Well, I wanted to go to Hunza and to go to Hunza I knew I'd have to climb peaks and high roads and what's even more important, I had to conquer the fear within me!"

My desire to go to Hunza and the burning questions that had to be answered and the search for truth—all of these things combined were much stronger than my fear of heights.

That's the story, pure and simple, that started me on a chase that led to the ultimate in mountain spectacles. I've always had a lust for adventure (who hasn't?) and somehow, even as a boy, I vowed I'd do these things some day. Still there had to be an inception, a beginning.

The germ of the idea had to be born somewhere. Where did it start? What brought it about? How did it happen? A man just doesn't, out of the blue, come up with the idea that he's going to Africa or the North Pole. There usually is a more or less direct rhyme or reason. So I allowed my mind to float back to where the idea, the dream or the vision was born.

CHAPTER 2

Why Hunza?

In July 1958, I motored to Salt Lake City in the company of my son, Stephen and my friend, Cecil Brunton, the principal of the public school in Niagara, on our way out west to visit, among other things, Sequoia National Park. The stop at Salt Lake City was arranged in order to pick up my young friend, Bob Rodale who was flying there from Pennsylvania and who would continue the trip to California with us.

We were waiting at the airport when Bob's plane landed. He'd had a grim flight from Denver. We spent the night at Hotel Utah and got off to an early start in the morning. We headed to Boise, then swung about into Oregon, heading down the Pacific Coast and through the Redwood Forest.

'Twas late afternoon when we reached the Redwood Forest. We were bound for San Francisco. Whether you have seen these giant, majestic redwood trees

before or whether you see them for the first time, the same sense of awe and humility comes over you. I've often wished that I could live among them. I think I'd become an ascetic and devote my time to pining and offering thanks to Heaven. At least that's the way the redwood trees affect me.

One seldom drives fast on the highway through the Redwood Forest because there is too much beauty, too much grandeur to be spoiled by not seeing and appreciating it. Conversation usually comes to a standstill except for awed exclamations like "Look at that majestic tree there—and that marvel of nature—and there is a fallen one! Oh, how marvelous, how beautiful, how inspiring!" These adjectives are commonplace when describing the redwoods.

Evening shades were falling quickly and we began to look about for a place to rest for the night. We stopped at what appeared to be a large window-encased bungalow that had some insignia indicating that we could find shelter. The place had already been closed for the night, but the folks were kind enough to get up and about and show us to a large log cabin that had accommodations for the four of us. They put on the kettle and we had some coffee and a sandwich, for which we were grateful.

Then we went back and sat on the veranda of our bungalow for a while and noticed that our quarters were surrounded by redwoods which made our setting just perfect. I mentioned a walk but Cec and Stevie begged off, saying they were tired. Bob assented.

Before starting, I walked over to my car and opened the trunk and pulled out two canes—I mean, walking sticks. One was a fancy one that my staff had given me as a gift a few years prior for Christmas. The other was one that I had bought when I was in Tyrol in

Austria. It was a mountaineer's cane with a spiked point. This one I handed to Bob, I kept the other, and we strutted down the roadway towards the main highway.

I had never known the pleasure of walking midst the redwoods at night and I was enjoying every second and so was Bob. We discussed travel and people, distant lands and places and then I said to Bob, "You know there is one place in this wide world that I'd love very much to visit."

"Where is that?" he asked.

"A place called Hunza!" I sighed.

"You see," I went on, "I read your father's book called *The Healthy Hunzas* some years ago and since then I've read everything on the subject that I could find in the library or anywhere. There really isn't too much written on the theme and much of it is controversial. I'd like to go to that place and see things as they are for myself.

"But from what I've read, I understand one has to first get an invitation from the Mir, the ruler of the state and that seems to be a most colossal enterprise. I wouldn't even know where to begin. Yet the thought of going there and studying the ways of the people intrigues and haunts me. If I only knew how to go about it!"

I was almost dumbfounded when I heard Bob say, "Why, that can be arranged easily enough!"

"What are you saying?" I almost jumped at him.

"It's just that my father knows the Mir of Hunza and has been corresponding with him for years. If you like, I'll write to him and ask him to invite you."

"But remember," he went on, "the terrain leading to Hunza is a difficult one and there is an element of danger. Are you prepared and ready to accept and

take risks, apart from all of the other factors?"

"I can't visualize anything stopping me as long as I can get that invitation," I said seriously and soberly.

When I returned from my western sojourn a few weeks later, the vision of Hunza had begun to take a firm hold on me. In fact, it haunted me both day and night. I dropped Bob a letter and suggested that he implement his promise of a few weeks ago.

As I have found out in my association with Bob, he is a "doer." His activities are not confined to the verbal. In a short time I received a letter from Bob in which he enclosed a letter from the Mir of Hunza, inviting Bob and his friends to visit that strange state. I wrote to Bob and said that this wasn't what I wanted, for Bob had no intention of taking the trip with me to Hunza. What I wanted was a direct invitation to me.

Sure enough, within 3 weeks I received a letter from the capital, Baltit, and there was an invitation to me from the Mir himself to visit that fabulous dream-like little land.

If you don't know now, it will eventually dawn upon you that I am a talkative man. But the fact is that I did tell my friends and acquaintances about my intended trip to Hunza and I went even a step or two further by inviting Friend Cec to come along with me. In making this offer to Cec, I did not for one moment imagine that he would take me up on it for any one of three or four good logical reasons. But to my surprise he said that he'd love to go if matters could be arranged.

Well, when I found that he was willing to go along, I became very accommodating because he was a dandy traveling companion . . . game for anything, never complaining, no carping, no criticism. I remember that harrowing and costly day when our car "konked out"

about 50 miles from Las Vegas at noon on the burning desert. We got out and looked around and appraised our plight. But not one single word of complaint from Cec—he didn't even swear. (Of course I took care of that end pretty well.)

When I mentioned the dream about Hunza to him, he told me that it had for years been one of his ambitions to visit India and as we would be including India in our itinerary, things then began to take on a harmonious note.

About here we got busy discussing the various aspects of the trip and he was quite firm in informing me that, while he would like to go with me, it was not absolutely certain that he could and I must understand that! But he really wanted to go and would go if at all possible.

I did not press him but at least now I had an excuse for getting down all the maps, atlases, globes, encyclopedias and such paraphernalia as one would need to dig through to acquaint himself with the areas he intended to visit. It became apparent right from the beginning that no one knew very much about Hunza or its people. The encyclopedias gave scant details, insufficient for any practical purpose. If I were going to become reasonably familiar with vital details of Hunza, I would have to learn and dig the information out from various and distant sources myself.

Soon news of my intended journey to Hunza began to circulate in the vicinity. Friends and acquaintances began to drop in at my home and office to see me and offer advice and suggestions, but most frequently, to ask questions. Only the rare one knew of or had ever heard of the place.

When I told them that it was located in one of the most inaccessible parts of Pakistan, surrounded by the greatest concentration of rock and glacial heights in

the world, the question that invariably sprang from their lips was, "Why Hunza, of all places in the world to visit?" And just as sure, they'd mention any one of many places that were dear to them that I should see or visit. But Hunza—why Hunza of all places?

After this question had been hurled at me about twenty times, I thought I'd better prepare a stock answer so I could quickly and deftly parry the local thrusts, so as not to waste a lot of valuable time on useless explanations.

I have been for many years, and still am, keenly interested in the ways and means of maintaining or regaining good health. I remember as a young lad taking every kind of concoction that someone would recommend to me—onions because they would make me strong, prunes because they were good for my stomach, Spanish flies because they would make me passionate and bear grease or lanolin from sheep because it would make my hair grow. I remember squeezing the juice from the orange rind into my eyes because somebody told me it would improve my vision. I remember rubbing a garlic clove around the crust of my bread because someone else told me it was healthful. Then, too, I remember someone telling me that hot peppers would prevent a cold if eaten early in the winter and, boy, oh, boy, I paid dearly for that lesson.

I admit that I did not then, nor do I now, possess any great knowledge, information or insight on the subject of health. But it does indicate a pattern, even though primitive, that I valued my health and sought to protect it.

Then I read Mr. Rodale's book called *The Healthy Hunzas* and that just triggered the course I was to follow. I decided to search further and eagerly gobbled up anything I could find about the Hunza people.

Having exhausted all the books I could obtain on the topic, which consisted of a total of six volumes at that time (two of which devoted but a chapter or two to Hunza) I was disappointed and dissatisfied, feeling there was a great deal more to be learned. But at the moment there was little I could do about it.

I've always been a sucker for a good yarn or story and I believed everything that these writers told me about this unusual land and its people and never have I ever regretted believing not only tales of this type but many others. There is a satisfaction in being able to go through life believing what your neighbor and your fellow man tells you. Sure, some of it turns out to be lies, some an exaggeration and some an honest mistake but I find it suits me to believe people and to accept what they write.

I've also learned that what one person may honestly believe to be true can turn out to be false. But from what I had already read, I did accept the positive fact that these people were among the healthiest on earth. However, there was much confusion, misconception and only dubious proof.

Evidently many statements concerning their superior health were made on meager information and data. I believe that too many people had seen too little and written too much. The more I learned and studied about Hunza, the greater the number of questions that popped up unanswered. Then, too, I found that for every word that had been said about Hunza, there were ten words that had been left unsaid. "Why?" I asked myself.

For example . . . What does an actual day's ordinary "farin' " consist of in a Hunzan home? Is their life span greater or less than that of the people of America? What about infant mortality? Is there an absenteeism

problem? I doubted if there would be much point in asking them what the major cause of untimely death is because I was reasonably sure that autopsies are unknown, let alone performed. Do they smoke tobacco? Do they drink spirituous or intoxicating liquors? If so, what are they? Has the high altitude and dry climate anything to do with their health? Is tuberculosis known? Heart disease? Cancer? Diabetes? Muscular dystrophy? What is the condition of their teeth and do they brush them and if so, with what? Is their diet chiefly vegetable? Raw or cooked?

It seems that none of the writers in the past answered these questions—either not at all or not fully enough to satisfy my bent.

Then, too, I had read or was led to believe that they were completely self-sufficient. That seemed to be utterly impossible to me. It was incredible! I had always assumed that a small country with so many disadvantages, and lacking ever so many things that other parts of the world possess abundantly, could not in itself be self-sufficient. To me that was one of the most important challenges of all. How could a people numbering from 25,000 to 30,000, living in one of the most hazardous terrains or surfaces on earth, and with such tiny spaces of arable land, maintain self-sufficiency to the degree of almost perfect health, unknown anywhere else on earth!

One of the staples of their diet is apricots, I had read. Every part of the apricot is used—even an oil is wrung from the kernels for food and lighting. Is the apricot then such a vital, potent food? Are we overlooking its great therapeutic or food value? My reaction was that people just can't maintain robust good health on one kind of fruit. Yet all the writers and others who visited the country seemed to agree that

they are an exceptionally vigorous, intelligent and healthy people.

Now you have the basic motivation of "Why Hunza?"

But hold—I haven't told you all—not even a fraction. You will see that I have many more reasons and justifications for planning and taking the trip!

CHAPTER 3

The Scrambled Puzzle

FOR NIGH ON THIRTY YEARS I have been a farmer—an agriculturist, if you want to make it sound snobbish or snooty. More definitely, my lands are devoted to raising plants and trees . . . I am a nurseryman. Therefore you may gather the reasons for my keen interest in the agricultural aspects of my proposed travels.

It has been my experience that some peoples throughout the world know more than we about the land. I've also found that some know less! Yet, no matter where I travel, I find that there are some things we might learn from the tillers of the soil in that segment of the earth's surface.

Much though we in America pride ourselves on our great knowledge and know-how, especially in agriculture, the fact remains (after making cold, on-the-spot comparisons) that we're not even remotely as smart as we think we are. I have long suspicioned this but

could not prove it. From my extensive reading I knew that there were people scattered in remote sections of the world who knew more about the land and how to care for it than we did.

Broadly speaking, tillers of the soil seem to practice the same general principles of agriculture. True, we use powerful tractors but, to a lesser degree, we also use horses. In some parts of the world they use oxen. Then again, in more remote sections, human beings are still used to pull the plow or the earth-opening implements.

The equipment used may vary from country to country. Still the means and knowledge remain somewhat the same. While we may brag and boast of the record that America has the greatest agricultural productivity in the world, this in the main may be due to more powerful machinery and the use of gasoline, rather than any specific knowledge or know-how or the natural productive capacity of the land. Remember, our land in America, in comparison to the age-worn soil of India or China, is veritable virgin soil.

Apricots and Hunza seemed almost synonymous terms. I am well acquainted with the apricot tree. I know the apricot fruit and in every document about Hunza the value of this fruit was strongly stressed. I wondered if the apricot tree was indigenous to that part of the world. I found out that, according to the encyclopedias, it was native to either China or Persia. Well, Hunza is in between the two and I would try to find out if the apricot is also indigenous to the Hunza region.

Then, too, I wondered, do their apricots come true from seed or must they be grafted? Are these people acquainted with the art of grafting or budding? Do they have bees for pollination? Does each individual

farmer grow his own trees? Are their orchards cultivated or are they grown on sod?

What are their chief crops? How do they retain and maintain soil fertility? Is there much wild life? If they have bees, why is it I've never heard of anyone eating native honey in Hunza? Are their trees bothered with bugs, diseases, borers, insects and such? And do they treat or spray in any way?

These are some more of the questions that I wanted to ask the people in Hunza in order to find out the true answers for myself. These were not all, but they are a few of the many things I thought of as I sat in my chair at the office, thinking and planning my coming trip to Hunza.

Another very important matter is . . . Do many people leave Hunza? Do they desire to leave Hunza or only go because of sheer necessity? Can the terrain of Hunza be improved or built up to support a greater population? . . . For it is clearly indicated that there is now insufficient arable land to support more people; thus, the necessity of self-imposed birth control.

Then, too, how come Hunza has remained free of most of the curses to which the earth has fallen heir? Why have not the wild bad men from Afghanistan and the brigands from China attacked Hunza? Is it because the Hunzans are fierce warriors or because it's so "darn" hard to get into Hunza?

Could it be that the sanctity or seclusion of the country is due to the fact that the people possess so little that it is not worth anybody's while to spend time, money, energy and human lives to try to take it away from them? If that is true, then the only people and places safe from man's greed and war are territories that no one else wants because of the great effort required for human sustenance. It seems that both

marauders and conquerors say, "If you have to work hard in your country, we don't want it, even if it is lovely and beautiful!"

Perhaps, too, I wanted to go to Hunza because that country represented something that I always believed in with my whole heart and soul. That is, that only an uphill struggle for existence maintains the human mind, spirit and body in a healthful and permanently alert condition. I've always believed that victories and compliments never ever did a man a good turn. But defeat and difficulties spur him on and on to bigger, better and greater things in life!

I read in one of the reports about Hunza that when a gold strike was rumored to have been found there, the Mir was greatly troubled for he knew if gold were found, it would mean the end of the seemingly idyllic existence of his people.

Money seemed to have little or no use in Hunza. Few people possess any and it is not used as a medium of exchange. The average citizen does not come in contact with money to the value of $5.00 in a year.

The wheel, considered to be one of man's greatest inventions, is, to the best of my powers of observation, unknown in Hunza. Probably I should say it is unused in Hunza, because the people actually do know both the principle and the use of the wheel.

It is a fact that the Mir owns two jeeps but the amount of road traversable with a jeep is but a scant few miles and even these few miles are continually being blocked and rendered impassable by the indomitable forces of nature. When I first heard of the jeeps in Baltit, and then saw them, I felt then and I still feel that they are more ornamental than utilitarian. I might even say they are used more for impression than utility.

The flour mill, of course, uses round stones and the

lower one is driven by a water paddle, but I cannot state with authority that the principle of the wheel is involved in this instance.

When one realizes that the people of Hunza are an intelligent race, the fact that they choose not to use the wheel indicates that in the terrain in which they dwell the use of the wheel is impractical. From my on-the-spot observations, I support their practice.

It was my profound desire to find out whether or not mankind can live and be happy without money and material things. This might truly tell whether or not money is the root of all evil and strife. It was my hope to bring back the answer as to whether or not man can have health without money and modern scientific advancements.

If humanly possible I also wanted to establish clearly and definitely whether or not man needs fertilizers, sprays, insecticides, fungicides or herbicides. This I intended to do without fear or favor—of or to any man. I received no contributions or donations from anyone. I am obliged or committed to no individual or group.

To perform a task of this nature objectively, one must set out with an open heart and mind, without preconceived opinions or prejudices. I was not going out there to prove anything. It was my honest and sincere intention to go there to learn and to report factually and truthfully exactly what I did learn . . . not to draw conclusions, unless I clearly identified them and specified that they were only drawn conclusions.

In a well-written book that I read recently there was a chapter devoted to Hunza. But there was one statement contained in the volume that troubled me. I felt it was wrong and couldn't be true and the only way I could find out was by going there and getting

the information first-hand.

It concerned birth control in Hunza. Because they have such limited quantities of arable land, birth control is an absolute must. And here the author stated the means of birth control: "When a wife becomes pregnant she leaves her husband's bed and does not return again until the baby is weaned which is two years for a girl and 3 years for a boy."

Strange to relate, this did not make sense to me, for reasons that any married couple should well know and I felt that the author had either fouled up the translation or that the information came second-hand, indirectly or got crossed up somewhere along the line.

It is my hope that all of the questions and problems I have mentioned, as well as many more, will be cleared up in the following pages and chapters of this book.

CHAPTER 4

Is Hunza Shangri-la?

I DON'T KNOW whether or not you've ever read H. Rider Haggard's famous, fabulous novel, *She* or Hilton's stirring, imaginative *Lost Horizon*. I subscribe that both are important contributions to our literature. I do not argue that these authors stand in the same light as Milton or even Dickens . . . yet, their contributions cannot be taken lightly. Haggard and Hilton fed man's escape mechanism to a dreamlike degree. They took him from the realities of life to a land of fantasy and there is nothing that a tired body and mind needs more than a trip to a lost paradise.

I was but a growing lad when *She* came out and hit the bookstalls and, oh, how it lifted me and I soared with it to joy beyond the clouds. I lived every action, every deed, every adventure that the author described. I felt as though I were transposed thousands of years back to strange lands and bold adventure.

In this story, the hero, a present day explorer, is driven relentlessly by a telepathic power to search for someone or something in a strange land. Eventually he finds his beloved who was still waiting for him in her queendom, although more than 2,000 years had elapsed. But she had learned the secret of immortality and had retained her wondrous beauty and her youth.

Ah, that, my friends, was quite a reunion—quite a love scene! I still tingle all over when I think of it. She knew when he was killed that he would return, so she waited and return he did.

It was one of the most tender, moving and fascinating yarns I have ever read. Somehow I felt that it was not just a story, a play of words, but that it was true. I could live through every scene. I could see and feel every action. I was so impressed and taken over by this fanciful tale that it haunted and became the theme of my every daydream.

Obviously many thousands of other people in the English reading world were affected as I was because it sold like hot cakes and people clamored for copies of it. It might have been that this novel came out at a time when men needed the fanciful, the fantastic to take them away from the stark, brutal reality of World War I and a serious, troubled period for mankind.

Therefore my desire to go to Hunza was a natural one. I was still seeking my dream world—my paradise on earth! How mighty and how potent is the quest for knowledge, for contentment, for happiness, when a man will travel tens of thousands of miles from home with a hope of finding Shangri-la!

However, there was a danger, a grave danger, that when I reached the scene of my hopes and dreams, I would be disappointed, disillusioned, forlorn. But I was

not to be deterred. Nothing could stand in my way. That was a chance I had to take. No matter what the results, the price or the consequence, I had to strike out, I had to know. Would it not be better to remain at home and be content with my dreams, rather than take the risk of having my dream world shattered? No matter—nothing could stop me. Come what may, I had to go!

The different stories and tales woven about Hunza made it sound like the place that every man dreams about but never finds, the place which his heart and soul hungers and yearns for continually. Why do men have to have dreams of this kind in order to survive? There must be something lacking in our way of life that makes daydreams of this sort a necessity—a requisite for survival.

I don't know the answers. Perhaps the learned scientists someday will solve the mystery. Yet, I do suspect that this type of escape is necessary because mankind is living a way of life and in an environment that is actually foreign to his basic needs and instincts. It is true that a man gleans and hungers for those things that he cannot find in his daily way of life.

I have often suspected that dreams are a vital part of man's existence. Perhaps they are the source of energy which he taps in his subconscious mind and thus, it sustains him during his living day.

I don't know whether or not it is given only to man that he can have the triumphant joys and pleasures that are found in dreaming. Somehow I don't think the good Lord bestowed that divine blessing only upon mankind and forgot the lesser animals.

Since time immemorial adventurers, travelers, kings, emperors, dictators and yes, dreamers have been seeking a land that possesses the qualities ascribed to Hunza.

If Hunza holds all of these qualities, why do not other places, other states and countries seek to emulate the example? Is it the extreme harshness of the terrain surrounding Hunza that makes it what it is? If this is so and it is the terrain that is wholly or partly responsible for this idyllic condition or existence, then why doesn't it hold true for Nagir and other small principalities on the other side of the Hunza River? Yet travelers tell that there is a distinct difference between the people on one side of the river and those on the other. It is admitted that the district on the Hunza side is much more dangerous and precipitous. So that still might be the key to the solution.

From what I have been able to read and learn, the people of Hunza come closest to living in the true Shangri-la of any people on earth.

It is related and stated emphatically that they are a healthy, happy and contented people. These are the three most important attributes of all human achievements and if the people of Hunza hold all of them, then we must concede that there is Shangri-la!

For a people to be genuinely happy they must have the conditions, surrounding them and within their own hearts and souls, that create happiness.

Happiness is a most elusive commodity in our Western world, even with our "world's highest" standard of living. Though man's ingenuity and nature's blessings have contrived to give us comforts and luxuries to overflowing, we have found neither happiness, peace nor contentment. You see, you must realize that there is something lacking in our environment. The spark is not there, for 'tis generated only in the depths of the soul. Our phony way of life does not provide the energy required to set the wheels of generation of true happiness in motion.

I hope to seek and learn whether man's wishes for health, happiness and contentment are sincere or whether they are but mealy-mouthings. I have as yet not seen or found absolute proof that man sincerely desires these three heavenly blessings.

I wonder what would happen if man were given the opportunity to enjoy a paradisiacal way of life as related above. As you know, everything must have its association and price. So must mankind pay the dues that accrue if he wishes to enjoy that idyllic existence. Will he pay the price of rigid self-discipline, of hard work, of by-passing comforts and a life of ease? For the freedom that he gains, he will lose the government-guaranteed, controlled security. Sure, in Hunza a man has security, too, but a security that he himself provides by means of his foresightedness and industry. It is a glorious feeling but how many will choose it in the face of its demands?

I sincerely suspect that every man in his heart really wants and seeks a Shangri-la but it must be had at his own price and on his own terms. That is why paradise is usually found only in a man's dreams. From what I have seen of people I believe that about 8 out of 10 wouldn't go to Shangri-la if it didn't provide TV. Another one out of 10 wouldn't have it unless they could enjoy the foods they like. Well, that would just about rule out 90 per cent of all those who dream of Shangri-la because there is no TV in Hunza and they eat what they can get—mostly raw foods. So just about here most of the applicants for tickets to Shangri-la would say, "Well, if I can't have all the things I like, then what do I want long life for?" Again, that depends on where and how high you set your values.

History seems to relate that one of the main and most important things man has sought through the

ages was freedom. But I am beginning to suspect that this is no longer humanity's greatest need. Material comforts, sensual pleasures, varieties of food, government security have all become more important than freedom.

Then it must be that only a small segment of the population wants the Shangri-la of the Hunzans. Perhaps the rest will settle for their present socialistic-type state as their Shangri-la.

Many applicants to Shangri-la would renege when they found out they couldn't have liquor, cigarettes, automobiles, electricity, prepared foods, modern housing, reading material, lavish entertainment . . . none of which are found in Hunza.

I've always believed that Shangri-la was purely a state of mind . . . nobody really wants it, but it is pleasurable to envisage, to hope for and to seek refuge in.

Well, whether or not I would find Shangri-la on my trip to Hunza, there was no doubt in my mind that I would find people who live without so many of the things that the rest of the world thinks essential. Perhaps the happiness that we seek is just a state of mind and the Hunzans have become attuned to that state.

We've always been told or led to believe that people who are half-wits or lacking in intelligence are usually happy people. Could it be the Hunzans are half-wits? But that didn't even merit consideration because from every bit of information I had been able to gather, the Hunzans are a little more capable than the average individual throughout the world.

So therefore, their bliss is not due to ignorance. Who knows? It may have something to do with leadership! Often that is the answer to many successes and failures, whether it be in politics, war, business management or in absolute monarchies.

CHAPTER 5

The Quest Begins

OUR PLANE was originally scheduled to arrive at Karachi at 7.15 P.M., but due to some mechanical difficulty we were held up at Teheran for repairs. This we did not mind as it gave us time to see the sights in the capital of Iran.

Airports are always oodles of miles from the city proper. When the airport folks saw that the engine trouble would be some hours, they immediately marshalled a bus and all of the passengers were herded into it and driven from the airport through the country and to and through the city of Teheran itself.

If the Sahara Desert is any drier than the roads and fields surrounding Teheran, then the Sahara must be awfully dry. By the look of things, I'd suggest that water was worth $1.00 a quart. A water ditch or aqueduct ran the full length of the road that we were traversing, but it didn't seem to help the fields very

much because they looked, oh, so dry and desolate.

As we reached the outskirts of the city, we began to pass natives walking, alone or with a goat or sheep or cow or any one of many other kinds of animals. As the bus ambled along, the people and the animals became more numerous. But we noticed that everybody and everything seemed to congregate, walk along, sit down or sleep beside the waterway. There was no doubt about it; that water course was just about the most important thing in their lives—and justifiably so!

This was actually my first real view of the East and I tried my best not to miss a trick. My eyes and my so-called brain were as greedy as greedy could be and I was lapping up everything.

The natives were typical Easterners of the kind one reads about, but doesn't believe . . . unkempt, unshaven, poorly or raggedly dressed in any kind of clothes, ensemble or rags they could get and they were, by our standards, quite dirty looking. Remember, I said "by our (Western) standards." I guess they weren't necessarily dirty or ill-clothed by their standards. But here I'm trying to describe them so that you will know what they looked like.

From the piles of bedding and furniture heaped on the corners of most streets at the watercourse it appeared that entire families took up their abode there. Could be they live outdoors there only during the dry seasons or is it always dry? I couldn't visualize them seeking cover anywhere if rain came. There just didn't seem to be any shelter about.

Then we began to see traders, peddlers and shopkeepers, all peddling their wares and dealing wherever and whenever the opportunity presented itself. This usually took place at corners, where the aqueduct wound or curved irregularly around the street.

The city wasn't much to rave about. The best comparison that I could make, so you will have an idea what I'm talking about, would be to tell you that it resembled one of the Western towns that you would see in the old cowboy movies or maybe like you see in *Gunsmoke*. Most certainly the general outline of the buildings wasn't much better, although some of the streets were paved.

We got to our hotel, which was a large wooden building containing 4 stories, about one o'clock, and it certainly caused a furor and a hubbub when the 50 or 60 passengers from the plane all got into the hotel at one time and were looking for rooms. But eventually we all got satisfaction. Cec and I were allotted separate rooms.

I had just washed my dirty face and was settling down for a nap (this was about two o'clock in the afternoon) when a knock came on my door. I opened it and there was a messenger to tell me that the engine trouble had been repaired and the plane would be taking off shortly. So I had to hurry up, scurry downstairs and climb into the bus again. That was the extent of our visit in Teheran. However, it meant that we reached Karachi at midnight, amidst a downpour of rain that left us well soaked before we made it to the airport offices.

You know, the Air people are great when it comes to advertising and telling you about the beauty of air travel and its conveniences, speed and luxuriousness. Yes, and they also do a mighty sweet job once you're aboard the plane by seeing that you have good food, that every comfort is provided and the air hostesses just can't do enough for you. However, the minute you get off that plane, brother, they're done with you. Even if they don't say it, it is made obvious by the way you're

treated. It's just like saying, "Good riddance!"

What I am trying to say, in this instance, I will illustrate by examples. I have a ticket to take me around the world but the places and the locations to which I am going are not on any one air line's route. It so happened on this trip that I traveled on six different air lines . . . T.C.A., Air France, Pakistan Air Lines, Indian Air Lines, Indian International Airway, Pan-American and then back again to T.C.A. Circumstances dictated in my specific case that I could not designate exact dates for my travels between various locations. For example, I didn't know how long I'd be in Karachi or in Lahore or in Rawalpindi or even in Kabul. Therefore, I had to take up my individual case at each one of these points with the airport officials. Well, the moment an air line took me to my temporary destination I was completely forgotten. As far as they were concerned I was never a passenger or a customer and they didn't even know I existed any more. They seemed to forget the fact that I was still traveling and held their tickets. While I was in their charge, I do admit they looked after me.

The trouble appears to me to stem from the fact that each individual air line is fighting for its share of business, and the moment you have to leave their line and get on someone else's, you, a passenger, become an orphan. Nobody is interested in you up until the time when you make a choice (although often you do not have a choice) of the air line on which you will travel to your next destination.

I'll bet a cigar or a cookie that the air lines people won't like me now!

It soon became apparent that rain of this type and kind was certainly unexpected and unusual for Karachi. Actually, the city itself makes little or no provision

to cope with any great amount of rainfall.

Everything was going nicely and smoothly at the Customs. They were checking everything off without trouble or inspection, when an officer spied the radio I was carrying. It was the radio I was taking as a gift to the Mir of Hunza. The Customs Officer was a very young man and his English wasn't too good. He asked what it was and I told him it was a radio. He didn't ask if it were new or not, but he said, "You'll have to leave that here. You can't take that with you!"

Boy, right there and then my heart went kerflop! After dragging the doggone thing for nigh on 8,000 miles, was I going to have it held up here?

"But I brought it along so I could enjoy the pleasure and news value while I was traveling in desolate country," I argued. "Why should you make me leave it here?"

And in truth, that is exactly what we intended to do with it on our way up to Hunza.

The Customs Clerk hesitated for a minute or two and then he picked it up and handed it to me and said, "Take!"

Man, oh, man, I didn't need any coaxing and I skedaddled right out before he had a chance to change his mind.

Cec sat guard for a moment over our pile of luggage and I stepped out of the door to hunt a taxi. I didn't have to look very far. There was an old Chevrolet taxi sitting right outside. The driver came into the building to help us drag out our bags and stuff.

Now the rain had stopped but the streets were still puddled. Our taxi driver told us that the city was actually flooded in many locations and that traffic was held up and had to be diverted in some sections.

"Take us to the Metropole Hotel," I ordered.

We had no reservations but were happy to find, when we arrived at the hotel desk, that rooms were available. A little later we were led up two flights of stairs and along a wide balcony-like corridor for what seemed to be half a mile, to our rooms. (There was a modern elevator but it was not in operation at that hour.)

We found our quarters comfortable and comparatively clean. The bathroom facilities were divided . . . the bath and wash basin were in one room, whereas the toilet was in another small cubicle. While convenient, comfortable and practical, it was a far cry from modern, up-to-date western hotel accommodations.

Now we realized that we were both hungry—really starved! We had had nothing to eat on the plane since the evening meal had been served many hours ago.

One of the 3 or 4 coolies who had carried up our luggage was still loitering outside our door, so we called him and expressed our desire to have something to eat. He knew enough English to understand what we meant and he went off to see what he could dig up.

Wherever you go or stop in India or Pakistan, especially around railway stations and hotels, you're hounded or beggared to death by coolies, servants, lackeys, porters and whatnot who are anxious to earn a coin or rupee for their services. From what I saw, they are quite willing to do most anything you ask of them. They seem genuinely willing to give service but they also expect to be paid.

The wages they earn are so meager—I was told, about 25 to 30 rupees a month—that if they can earn a rupee or two a day in tips, they're in clover. So it is not hard to understand why great numbers of these people frequent the places where travelers or white

men are apt to be for while a rupee doesn't mean too much to one traveling from the West (only about 20 cents) it means a half day's earnings for them.

In their anxiety to serve and earn a little money, you have at least 4 or 5 coolies carrying the bundles or bags that one redcap or one porter at our Western railway stations would carry. If you've traveled at all and used hotels in America, you know that it's not a bit unusual for a bellhop or porter to carry two good-sized bags under his arms and two more in his hands. Well, in the East that would require 4 coolies and each one would expect a rupee or so. Therefore it would cost you more money than it would in America. I'm not giving you an imaginary example but an actual one.

Before we got ourselves completely settled, he brought in a tray containing a huge pot of tea and some sandwiches. They were both welcome, believe me.

As we sat munching our sandwiches and sipping tea, I said to Cecil, "Tomorrow begins the big quest for us. Do we get that precious permit to get into Hunza? That is the all important question!"

Long before we left home we knew full well one could not get into Hunza without a permit. In fact, you can't get to Gilgit, which is the gateway to Hunza, without official sanction. Back home in Canada I was told or believed that you had to have permission from the Mir in order to enter Hunza. But I was soon to learn that you cannot enter Hunza without a permit from the Pakistan military authorities and that an invitation from the Mir of Hunza himself is not sufficient.

For 9 long months I had been corresponding with the Pakistan Embassy in Ottawa requesting the permit to enter Hunza State. I kept pressing for the re-

quired permit and the Ottawa office kept procrastinating and delaying by telling me that the matter was in the hands of the proper authorities and that the Embassy office would advise me as soon as they had further word. As time drew near for my departure I became quite concerned and began to shoot letters to Ottawa like bullets. But still it got me nowhere. The permit was not forthcoming.

I could get away from my work only during the months of June, July and August and as this was a very bad time of the year for getting accommodations both on the air lines and at the hotels, it was necessary that our reservations be made months in advance, strictly on speculation. Therefore, you can understand that I could not wait for the permit to arrive before starting to make bookings.

Confirmations from the air line office were received and June 26th was the date set for our departure from Montreal.

In desperation on June 8th, when no permit had arrived, I decided, upon advice, to take a bold step and write personally to the President of Pakistan, Field Marshal Mohammed Ayub Khan, who had taken over reign of office by a military coup d'état in October, 1957.

This bit of advice had been given me by Dr. Allen Banik who had visited Hunza about a year previously in conjunction with Art Linkletter's television program. In a letter to me he mentioned that the President of Pakistan had trouble with his eyes and his circulatory system and suggested that I take along with me specific drugs which had been prescribed for these conditions.

So on the 8th of June I wrote to Field Marshal Mohammed Ayub Khan, telling him of my desire to visit Hunza. I explained the difficulty that I had been en-

countering in getting the needed permit and asked his help. I dashed the letter off air mail and then after the fifth day I began to look for a reply. But the days ticked off and no reply came.

Intimate friends who knew the situation asked me, "Will you leave without the permit? What will you do if you get to Pakistan and they won't let you in?"

"We're leaving for Hunza with or without a permit," I replied. "We're not going to let a little matter of a permit stop us after we've made plans for almost a year. Come what may we are taking off . . . the rest is in the lap of the kind fates!" (Actually, I said this as a sort of half-hearted or half-witted joke.)

The days dragged. Each mail at my office was awaited, clutched and scrutinized personally, but the day and time of our departure arrived and no permit!

On the 26th day of June, 1959, I left Niagara-on-the-Lake, but I made sure to stop off at the post office in St. Catharines to examine my mail, with the fervent hope that the permit or a letter from the President of Pakistan would be found. It was not there!

Then I drove to the County Health Clinic to have my final cholera shot. Shots for yellow fever and shots for smallpox had been taken earlier. These had to be administered and testified to or else you couldn't go to the Orient . . . at least, not without procrastination and undue delays.

Now here we were in Karachi and tomorrow we would take up the trail of the elusive permit to Hunza! I was hopeful, but worried.

CHAPTER 6

Chasing the Elusive Permit

AT 8 O'CLOCK we went down for breakfast in the large air-conditioned dining room of the Hotel Metropole and had the customary juice, eggs, toast, jam and coffee. We had no complaints with either the food or the service, although they did not, in some respects, compare with the food and service that the West has to offer in the better hotels. Still it was a well managed, comparatively clean, modern establishment and a credit to Karachi and Pakistan.

At the desk I made inquiries concerning the proximity of the government offices and found that they were located within walking distance.

As Cec and I started striding down the road in the direction indicated by the clerk at the hotel desk, a boy or young man ambled up beside us and greeted us with a pleasant, "Good morning!"

"I would like to be of help to you and be your guide,"

he said in good English.

"We really don't need a guide," I replied tersely.

This did not phase him in the least.

"I can take you to all places of interest and act as your guide and interpreter and you are not obliged to give me anything. I would just like to be of help."

I appraised him carefully from head to toe. He was tall, slender and very dark, almost Negroid in color. He was dressed comparatively well for a person who made his living from this sort of work.

I asked his name and it was a mile long. "Don't you have any shorter name or nickname?" I inquired.

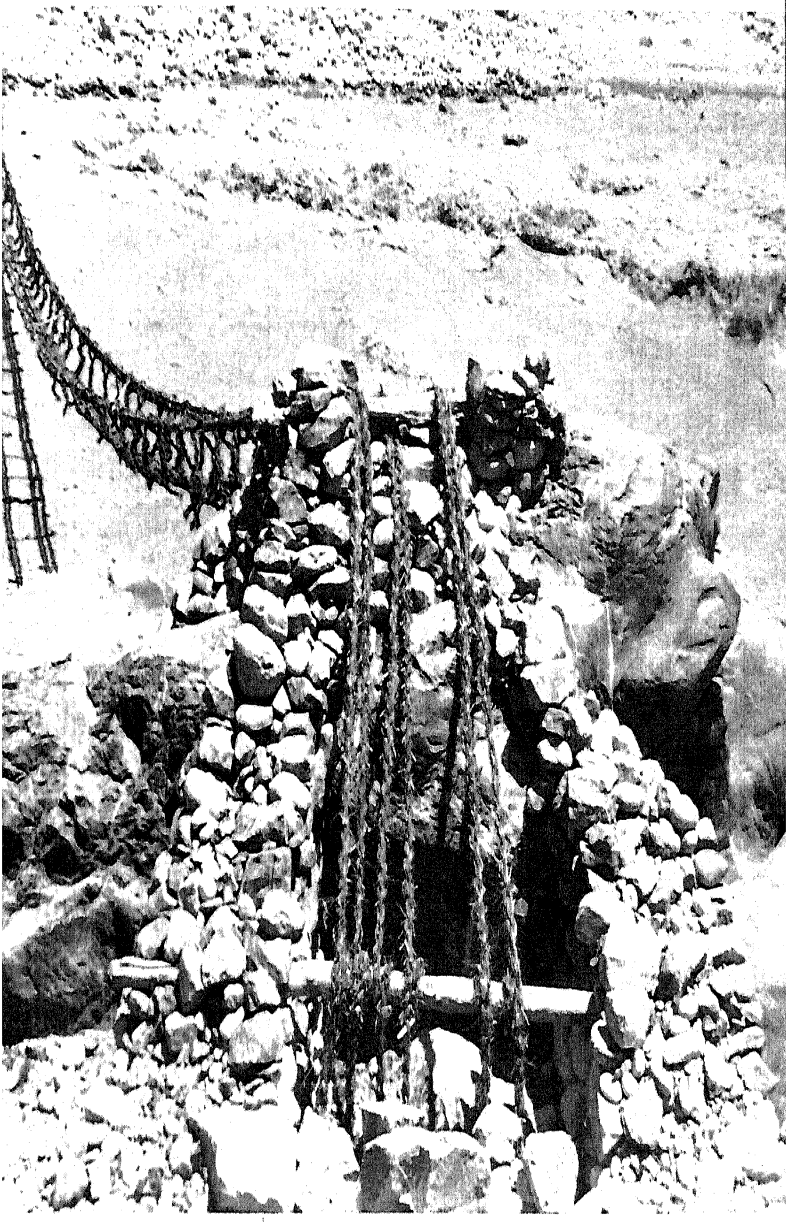
"Yes," he quickly answered. "Just call me Jimmy!"

"O.K., Jimmy," I said, "lead us to the government administration buildings."

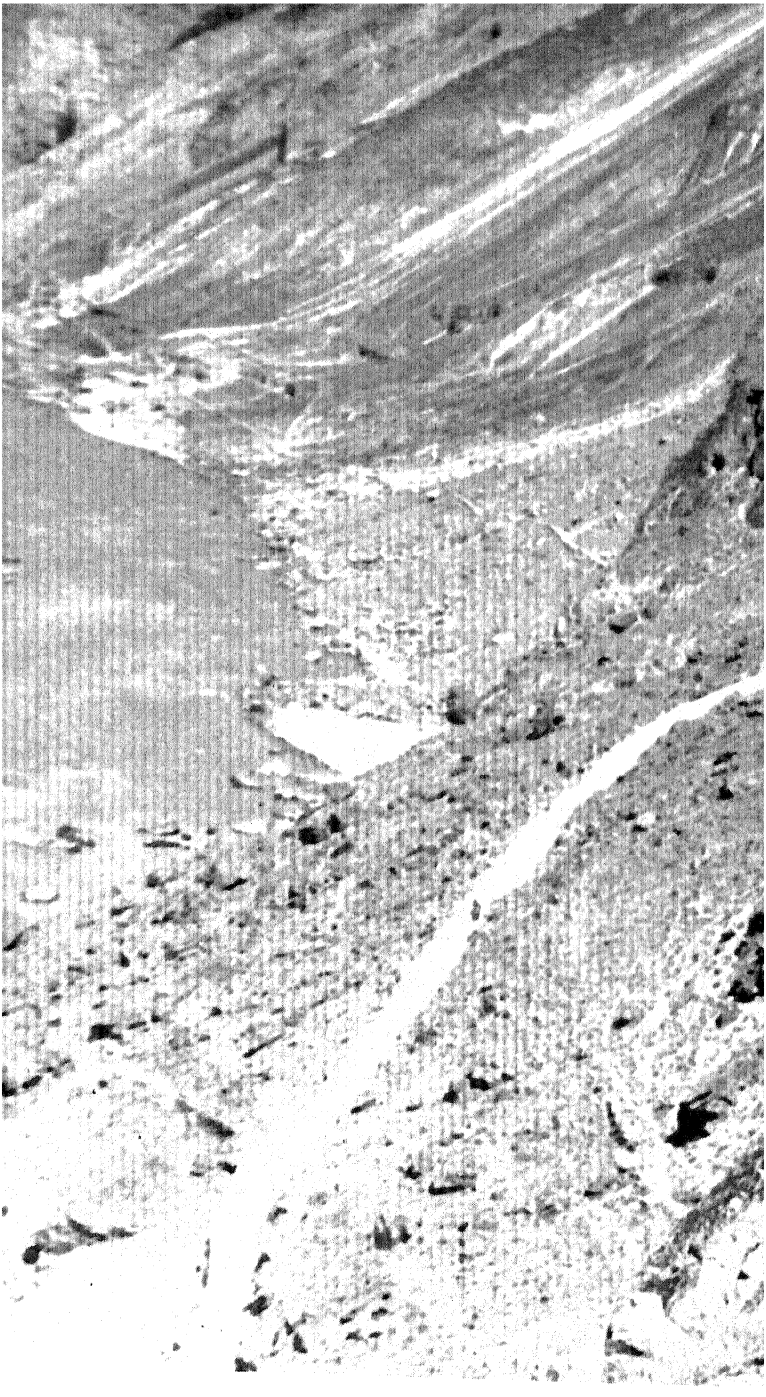
And off we started at an increased tempo.

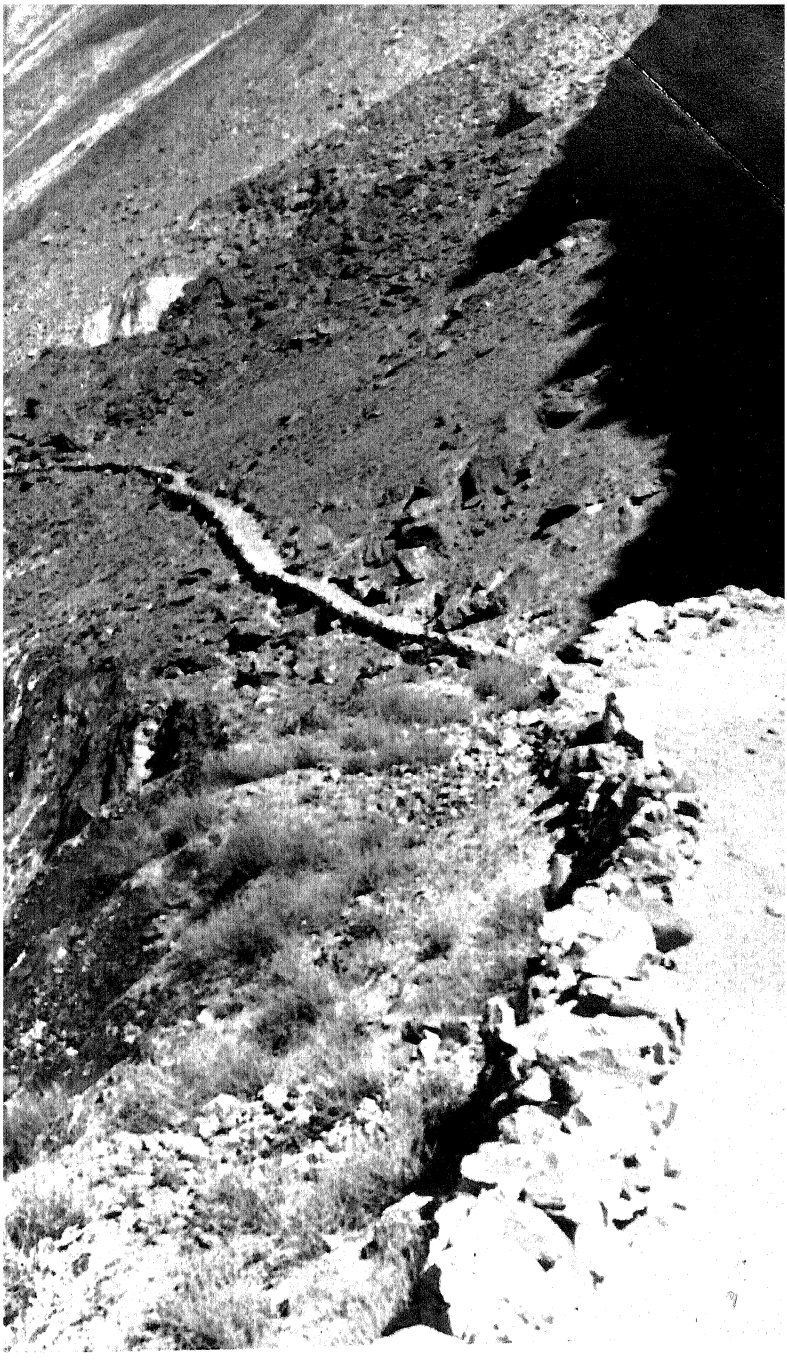
Here's a little pointer that may be of concern and of value to you if ever you're going to do any traveling. Don't depend upon a guide or travel folders to lead you to places of interest or to places worth seeing or knowing. The general practice is to take you or show you the most noted spots or the most attractive spots in the community or district, while the most interesting places in any city or country seem to lie off the well-traveled, beaten path. A little investigation or study will reveal them, and they are so worthwhile. So don't neglect them!

I recall about 3 years ago when I visited Paris. Of course it was essential that one go and see the wondrous Notre Dame de Paris, which we did, and 'twas an impressive sight. That night back at the hotel when I began to search through my records (I usually prepare well in advance or take notes through the years of places that I hope to see and visit when I get to a certain country or city) I found a little note marked



A rope bridge on the trail to Hunza.





A switchback on the Hunza trail.

No.G.17(3)/59.
Government of Pakistan,
Ministry of Kashmir Affairs.

.....

"Shahzada Kothi"
Rawalpindi, dated the 14 July, 1959.

P E R M I T.

M/S John Tobe and C.E.Brunton, Canadian Nationals, are allowed to visit Hunza for three weeks, during this month.

They may kindly be afforded necessary airlift facilities on payment of usual airfare and freight charges.

Photography in this area is prohibited except of the objects permitted by the Political Agent, Gilgit, in writing.

(M.A.BHATTI)
ASSISTANT SECRETARY TO
THE GOVT. OF PAKISTAN.

To

The Air Transport Officer,
D.A.V.College Building,
Rawalpindi.

Copy to:-

1. The Political Agent, Gilgit.

2. Mr. John Tobe (by hand).

(M.A.BHATTI)
ASSISTANT SECRETARY TO
THE GOVT. OF PAKISTAN.

John Tobe's permit to the "land of paradise."

"St. Julien de Pauvre." So in the morning I made inquiries at the hotel desk for the location or proximity of this place. They couldn't tell me. They'd never even heard of it! They searched through the directories and still couldn't find it. Then they remarked that if it were so obscure and so difficult to find, it was not worthwhile bothering with and they asked why we didn't go out and see the important things like the Louvre, the Bastille, the Flea Market, the Arc de Triomphe.

"They're all wonderful," I said, "but I want to find St. Julien de Pauvre!"

Well, they gave up the search, but I continued it. Eventually I found a note of the place and the location where it was supposed to exist. We then stalked out into the avenue and accosted a gendarme and asked him if he could tell us where this street was. We followed his directions and where do you think it was? A stone's throw from the Notre Dame de Paris! It was not as impressive an edifice as that much vaunted church but it was much older, of greater interest, of more valued history. In fact, it was one of the oldest standing churches in Europe. We were fascinated with it, but few people in the world have ever heard of it, let alone visited there!

So we continued our walk towards the government buildings in Karachi. As we marched along, on my right I noticed what appeared to be a nursery. This surprised and pleased me no end. I halted Cec and Jimmy and they followed me down the pathway. There were potted plants and trees growing on both sides and it was very much like our nurseries in the West, although the selection of plant material was entirely different. I could recognize but very few of the trees, shrubs and plants growing there.

I asked questions through Jimmy and had the names

of the various plants given to me. But they made no sense. They were native or Urdu names and had no botanical significance. Many of them proved quite interesting but I was helpless at that point.

I took their names down, sounding and spelling them out as carefully as I could, with the hope that later I might find someone who could translate from the Urdu into English and maybe then from English to Latin. But, unfortunately, my first attempt at plant hunting in Karachi didn't amount to very much.

After a few minutes at a fairly brisk pace we reached the government offices and to tell the truth, they're quite a dilapidated looking outfit. But this is understandable and pardonable when one considers the fact that the Government of Pakistan was set up in a hurry under the most difficult circumstances and conditions.

The first department he led us to was the Ministry of Information. Each office or section of offices is protected by or is in charge of an individual called a chowkidor and one very good point in our favor was that practically all of the guards or chowkidors, as well as the officials themselves, spoke English. In fact, I was more than surprised to learn that English was the official language of Pakistan.

To me this was an indication that these Pakistanis meant business and would progress and succeed in their experiment to set up an independent Mohammedan nation alongside India. But it is also a fact that there is strong demand by some political groups that English be abolished as the official language. For their sake, I hope that they do not succeed in getting it abolished because to me it appears that having English as their official language is a big forward step. I may be prejudiced in my thinking, but only time will tell.

From the Information Ministry we were sent to the

Ministry of the Interior—after a bout with many officials. They in turn sent us on to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Then to our chagrin, we found out that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was not in this area at all but was in the new set of buildings which were in another part of the city in a district called Clifton.

After quite some discussion between Jimmy and our informants, Jimmy turned to me and said that we'd best get a taxi or a tonga to take us to Clifton as it was a few miles from where we were. In fact, we had to go back to where we started from, at our hotel, and go in the opposite direction.

While our discomfiture was in progress, concerning the fact that we had found ourselves in the wrong part of the city, we were observed by a young man standing in the doorway of one of the buildings close by. He was very neatly dressed and carried a briefcase. He was quite young looking, yet appeared to be someone of importance. He had evidently been listening to our troubles. Eventually he addressed a remark to Jimmy in Urdu and Jimmy replied. Then he lashed out with many words that were obviously a sound reprimand for Jimmy, who turned colors and became quite embarrassed.

Now you'll say that I'm absolutely crazy when I tell you that I knew quite well what the boy was telling him, even though it was in Urdu, a language I know nothing about. But the fact is that I did know what he was saying. He was reprimanding our so-called guide for doing a poor job. This important looking young man was giving Jimmy "the devil" for taking on the job as a guide when he didn't know his business. He was telling him that he should have made it his business to find out where we were going. Then, if he didn't know where the office was, he should have made

inquiries before we left and taken us there directly. It was people like Jimmy who pretended to be what they weren't who were giving the good people of Pakistan a bad name. I felt, furthermore, that the young man could speak English but he did not address us at all. He was only concerned with Jimmy.

Nevertheless, there was no use crying over spilled milk. Besides, it wasn't Jimmy's fault. So we started to look about for a mode of conveyance. Before too long we found a tonga from which the passengers had just disembarked.

Cec, Jimmy and I loaded ourselves into the tonga. We put Jimmy up front with the driver and Cec and I sat in the back. When I looked at the pony that was to pull us, I had grave doubts and misgivings. The horse or pony was a scraggy, bony, flea-bitten sort of animal that in our country the Humane Society would not allow to be used for any type of work. But I found out later that most of the horses, ponies or donkeys used for this and other purposes in this country are in similar physical condition, or even worse. The poor beast had to be whipped almost the entire distance to get him to pull us and eventually we got to Clifton and pulled up right in front of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

A military guard was standing at the corner of the driveway and did not allow us to enter but indicated that we go to an office just a few paces up the street. There, we entered the office by means of pulling aside a reed covering, used in place of a door to keep out the heat and the flies, I guess. Jimmy was left outside as was the custom.

The young lad behind the desk, who looked as though he had just got up out of bed (his face wasn't washed and his hair wasn't combed) asked what he could do for us. We told him we wanted to see the

Minister or Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. He asked our names which he wrote in a book and then he called a number on the telephone. We didn't know to whom he was speaking nor what he said because he spoke in Urdu.

After he hung up the receiver, he took another book which appeared to be a type of bill book, placed a carbon paper between two sheets and then wrote something. When he finished, he handed us one part of it which I judged was our pass to get by the soldier. This proved to be true and one of his men then signaled for us to follow while he led the way.

We followed him through a courtyard, then up a couple of staircases, along a hall and into an office. There we were greeted by a young man who spoke fine English. He told us that the Secretary was out at the moment but was expected back shortly and perhaps he could be of some help to us as he was the Undersecretary.

We told him we wanted a pass to go to Hunza and he stated that he would have no knowledge or jurisdiction concerning this and we would have to wait until his superior, Mr. G. G. Khan, arrived.

He then, in a pleasant manner, engaged us in conversation and we had a most interesting and enlightening discussion, chiefly concerning Pakistan's new status, hopes and possibilities for the future. The young man was very intelligent and seemed to be very capable and he certainly made us feel at home.

Eventually Mr. G. G. Khan appeared and the young man introduced us to him, stated our mission and then took his leave.

We carefully outlined our desire and position to him. He listened attentively and told us he would take up the matter immediately with the proper authorities

and if we came back tomorrow, he would pass along to us any knowledge or information that he had received. With this, we took our leave.

We went back down the corridor and stairs the way we came and into the same so-called front office through which we entered. This time we were greeted by another young chap. He was handsome, quite businesslike and he asked us if we would have a cup of tea with him. We assented and in a few minutes tea was brought from the outside, presumably from a shop nearby.

He obviously was very keenly interested in us and he was eager to learn and find out as much as he could about the West. We chatted pleasantly and told him where we were from and where we were trying to go. He didn't appear to know any reason why we should not get our permit. Then for the first time I learned that even to folks living in Pakistan, Hunza is also a sort of "Promised Land" or Shangri-la.

When I discovered this I was genuinely surprised, and the reason is simple. I live within 12 miles of Niagara Falls and, while hundreds of thousands of people come to see the Falls annually, to myself and others living in the vicinity, this sight, one of the Seven Wonders of the World, evokes no surprise or even interest. That is what I thought would be the case when I got to Pakistan or close to Hunza.

Then he mentioned that he was keenly interested in Hunza and would like to go there himself. Now he was more than ever interested in our welfare. I explained that we had to come back the next day for a further consultation with the secretary and he said he'd look for us.

I didn't know then and I don't know now exactly what position he held. These young men were found

in all of the offices. Whether they were office boys, clerks, junior officials, I am unable to say. In most cases they were very pleasant young men and made one feel less annoyed at officialdom.

We went back to our hotel. It was now time for lunch which we had in the spacious air-conditioned Metropole dining room. The meal was satisfactory and the atmosphere pleasant.

Then we went up to our rooms for an afternoon siesta. You see, we picked up this habit of the country quite quickly. It seems that everybody rests for a couple of hours between 12 and 2 or 3 o'clock in the afternoon. I was reminded of the old song about mad dogs and Englishmen going out in the midday sun. So not being Englishmen or mad dogs, we thought we'd best take the siesta.

No matter how I try or what I do I can't sleep on an airplane. I'd lost one full night's sleep coming across the Atlantic. Then we certainly got very little sleep in Paris—with only one full day there, who could think of sleeping? In Rome 'twas the same—too much to see, too much to do. Time to sleep when there is nothing else at hand! But, even though tired, I couldn't rest very long in the afternoon. I felt there was too much to see here in Karachi, too, and at two o'clock on the dot Cec and I were up to do the town.

As we went down the stairs of the hotel lobby into the street, we were besieged by taxi, tonga and rickshaw owners. They just couldn't understand why anyone would want to walk. They offered to take us to the bazaars, to women or any other place we might want to go, but we brushed them aside.

At the hotel before we left we had asked the general direction of the bazaar and we headed that way. But we hadn't taken 10 paces when, lo and behold, Jimmy

was beside us. (I forgot to say that we parted company with Jimmy when we came back to the hotel and I had given him 3 rupees for his trouble.) Here he was again and actually we were glad to see him because we thought we needed a guide going through the bazaar, for we had been warned to be on guard against pick-pockets who infested the city. In fact, a young American lad who was living in Karachi and upon whom we called later, lost $300 via that route.

Then again, we were told time and time again that whenever you buy anything in the Orient, you must be very, very careful and offer half the price they ask for anything. I want to state here and now that we definitely did not find this mode of bargaining to exist. In most cases the prices they asked were the only prices and try as we might, we seldom got the price lowered —at least, not to any worth-while extent. It is no secret to relate here that the reduction we did get wasn't worth the extended argument, debate and haggling we had to put up to get it.

Conditions in Karachi shocked us. We were not prepared for a city that was befouled (and I use this word discriminately) with hundreds of thousands or even a million refugees.

Jimmy asked us whether we wanted to visit the big bazaar, the small bazaar or the English bazaar. After having the workings explained to us and thinking matters over, I told him we wanted to go to the small bazaar that is, more or less, the native shopping section and not the large stores of the department, or Western, style of business.

We didn't have very far to walk, probably only two miles from our hotel. To me this is only a nice stroll. Suddenly we were in it—a maelstrom—row upon row of narrow streets and shops. Each and every one of

these narrow streets was jammed with people—men, women and children. I was amazed, astounded, at the great number of small children and, believe it or not, many of them ran around the streets and shops stark naked. There wasn't a clean or tidy shop or even spot, by Western standards, in the entire area. It was interesting and colorful, but smelly.

We had been coached very, very carefully by many people who had had wide experience in traveling that we should keep very little money on our persons because of the danger of being waylaid. So I carried a money belt and, believe me, it was decidedly uncomfortable.

Right from the beginning Cec and I assumed an unusual means of getting about. We seldom walked abreast, unless the street was clear. Either he walked in front and I behind or vice versa. We followed this procedure practically throughout our entire journey and at no time were we threatened or even had the slightest mishap. Whether this mode of walking had anything to do with it or not, I'm not sure, but after 7 weeks we returned home unscathed.

We quickly learned that there are very few rules and regulations that are followed or adhered to on the streets of Karachi. The motorcars, bicycles, tongas, rickshaws, trucks and buses that go up and down the streets just move in reckless abandon.

At first this petrified me. I could not understand motorists or conveyance drivers who would deliberately go towards a pedestrian or animal that was on the road without attempting to veer away. But it wasn't long until I found out the reason and that was that the people of the East, including both the people of India and Pakistan, and yes, even the animals will not make any attempt to move out of the road as long as there is

a chance you will turn away or move for them.

Sure, I know, I realize and I understand that you will doubt what I say. You will not believe that this statement is true. But I assure you both sincerely and gravely that it is a fact. Both the animals, whether it's a cow, a dog or a goat, and human beings will not move from their position, whether it be sitting, lying, standing or walking, as long as they believe there is a chance you will move for them. Therefore, only when the moving conveyance is almost upon them do they move—and then they move with alacrity! This condition prevails generally throughout the length and breadth of India and Pakistan. (However, it definitely does not hold true in Japan.)

Cows are considered holy and sacred in India but you wonder why in blazes cows still wander through the streets of Pakistan, especially in Karachi, unmolested. Evidently the Moslems have been living so long in India that they have learned to accept the cows as part of their lives and therefore they allow them to wander through the streets of Karachi in exactly the same manner as they do in India.

While the cow is sacred to a Hindu, to a Moslem it is either a beast of burden or food. To a Moslem the pig is taboo. It is more than unclean, it is an abhorrence. So it was quite understandable that in our entire travels throughout Pakistan we never once saw a hog. But the holy cows—or should I say here in Pakistan, unholy cows—were omnipresent.

They stick their noses and big hulking forms into all quarters and their dung bespatters the sidewalks and roadways. I wondered then and I still wonder exactly what these cows live on because you can readily understand that there is no grass growing through the pavement of the busy, trafficked city streets. But I guess

they must get a fair share of garbage.

Everyone has heard of the sacred cows wandering through the streets of India but reading or hearing about it isn't quite the same as actually seeing it.

A trip through the fruit market of Karachi is something that must be seen to be appreciated. I wish I could tell you that it was a clean, orderly place displaying mounds of delectable, fine, high-quality fruits and vegetables but I vowed from the start that whatever I spoke of, mentioned and told about in this book would have to be the truth.

I am quite fond of fresh fruit and sought it wherever I went. But I was disappointed in the quality of the fruit found in both Pakistan and India. It did not in any way measure up to the splendid quality that is usually obtainable in any of the American cities. The only really good fruit that I had while in the East, until I got to Japan, were mangos. But then, what fruit on earth can compare with the flavor, succulence and out and out deliciousness of a good mango? I definitely go on record as stating that the mango is the finest fruit to be found in the world.

This may, to some degree, account for the poor quality of the other fruits. It seems that they believe as long as they have mangos, who cares about other fruits? Apples, pears, peaches, plums, nectarines, apricots and grapes were available, but none of them came up to the standards that I knew and was accustomed to getting at home.

CHAPTER 7

The Chase . . . Continued

WEDNESDAY MORNING AT 8.30 we again presented ourselves at the reception desk at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

As far as I could gather, the Government offices in Pakistan open at 7.30 A.M. and close at 1.30 P.M., without any break, except for the tea four or five times during the day, and the best time to contact the officials is bright and early in the morning. It would appear that the afternoons are actually too hot for any man to do good work. Sunday is a holiday, but not a religious holiday.

There was little or no delay in getting to the Secretary. The usual routine formalities were completed and we were soon seated at his desk. He greeted us in a clear businesslike manner and told us that he had been unable to contact the proper people and therefore he had nothing to report.

"However," he continued, "if you will return to this office tomorrow, I will have more information, and be in a position to report favorably—I hope!"

We thanked him for his courtesy and as there was nothing else we could do, we took our leave, stating that we would be back at the same time tomorrow.

When we went down to the reception office, we were again greeted by the same pleasant young man and a few of his cohorts. They sent out and got some tea for me and coffee for Cec and themselves and we spent a pleasant few minutes with them. They were keenly interested in America, especially Canada, and they expressed the desire and hope of maybe emigrating to this country.

Wherever we went or traveled it was obvious that everyone was acutely interested in America. In my own mind I had felt that the lure of America had worn itself out and that the peoples throughout the world were no longer looking with longing eyes towards the fair shores on this side of the Atlantic. But it was clear that the wealth, the power and the luxuries of America were still something that most of the underprivileged nations and peoples longed for.

Well, I guess that's only natural. The cities and towns of the East do not compare even remotely with the cleaner, neater, better built, modern cities of the West. Nor are the people housed as well, clothed as well and fed as well. No, there's no wonder or surprise in finding that people still have their eyes turned towards America.

There was nothing more we could do here, so we went back to the hotel for our lunch. The thought occurred to us that maybe we could get the Canadian High Commissioner in Karachi to lend us a hand. Perhaps he would have some influence. After all, that is

supposed to be his aim and purpose in a foreign land . . . to lend aid to his countrymen.

After lunch we made inquiries concerning the office of the High Commissioner of Canada and found that it was right there in the same hotel. This, we thought, was a break, so we headed for it the moment our lunch was finished. 'Twasn't hard to find. Signs on the corridor walls and arrows clearly indicated where it was. In fact, we wondered how we could have been so blind as to have missed it before.

We found it and entered a very neat, well-appointed office with all the comforts that one would find back home . . . big comfortable chairs, a splendid selection of magazines, especially Canadian ones. So we made ourselves comfortable and sat and waited.

A few minutes later a young man came in and asked us if he could do anything for us. He was dressed like an Englishman, looked like an Englishman and spoke with a distinct Oxford accent. So I asked him if he was a Canadian. He said he was.

"Well," I replied, "you could have easily fooled me!"

Actually I felt some type of annoyance. I would have expected to find a situation exactly like this if I had gone into the British High Commissioner's office. But to be about 7500 miles from home and walk into an office where you were expecting to find a Canadian atmosphere, and find a distinctly British one was, to say the least, unusual.

The young man told us his name. I forget what it was now. He further stated that the Commissioner was away today because it so happened that it was July 1 which is an official holiday known as Dominion Day in Canada. Good Canadian that I am, I had completely forgotten about it. He then asked us into his office where we chatted pleasantly for some time. We

stated clearly what we had in mind.

He told us that one of the members of their staff had only recently returned from a visit to Gilgit. As a matter of fact, he had fallen from somewhere and broken an arm or a leg. Then he went on to explain in the course of our discussion that he himself, although a Canadian by birth, had been educated and lived quite a time in England and that accounted for his accent and preference for British apparel.

It was my opinion, which I didn't express to him, that Canada would be doing a better job if in such places as Karachi and other points of a similar nature, she placed Canadians who looked like Canadians, acted like Canadians, spoke like Canadians and had the Canadian viewpoint.

Our reaction, after visiting many places, was that the Canadian passport was the best passport in the world. Before every American and Britisher seeks to do battle with me, I would ask you to hold and listen to my version.

There are many people in the East, especially in Pakistan and India, who dislike the British and the reason there is apparent . . . Britain was the master. Now that they've cast off their master's collar, they do not love him. They really don't hate him (or maybe they do) but they certainly don't love him.

Now take Americans. They've lent everybody in the world money. They've been generous to a fault. Such generosity as the Americans have shown has never been envisioned or evidenced in the history of the world. (No, I'm not talking through my hat, nor am I pouring on taffy. I'm relating what I believe to be the simple truth.) Well, when you start giving, you can never give enough. Naturally you give someone more and someone less. So, the one that you give less is angry

or peeved because you didn't give him as much as you gave the other fellow and the one you gave more says, "Well, you've got so much anyway, why shouldn't I have still more?"

Then, too, I found that they commiserated with Canada, which is sort of wedged in between two giants or monsters. So all in all we found the Canadian passport the best passport one could carry.

From what the lad at the commissioner's office told us, it appeared that we couldn't count on much help from that source and actually I didn't think we would get too much help because I recognized that if he could do it for us, he could do it for anyone else, and the permits to Hunza weren't that easy to get.

We took our leave without anything to show for our effort. I began to feel that "getting nowhere" was becoming a nasty habit.

Down we went, and out and hailed a cab. We had the driver take us to the Seventh Day Adventist Mission Hospital. I had promised to visit a young man whose parents lived in Niagara Falls. We asked at the information wicket for the young man we wanted to see. We were informed that he was off duty. The attendant, however, appraised the situation smartly and she contacted the young man at his home, after quite a to-do, and told him that he had some visitors from America. She informed us that he would be there as soon as he could get down. I thanked her profusely for the trouble she took to locate him and she knowingly said, "It's quite all right. They've gone to a lot of trouble for me at different times for the same reason. I know how important it is when friends come half way around the world to see you and bring a message from loved ones." I thought she was an understanding girl, and told her so.

Soon our young friend appeared. He took us for a tour around the hospital and told us many experiences and tales about his life in Karachi, and the people. We learned that they had more patients than they could possibly handle and that they always worked to capacity. He expressed his indignation at the difficulties that the Customs Officials caused them. He said, "On every drop of medicine we bring in we have to pay duty through the nose. Not only that, but they use every known excuse to delay and harass us. And believe me, the East knows how to delay and harass."

"But," he continued, "things have been a little better lately!"

"What brought that about?" I inquired.

"Just this," he said. "One of the officials who is a past master in the art of delaying, procrastinating and finding excuses—why this couldn't be cleared or why this can't be done—had a very sick wife and she almost died. It so happened that the thing that could have and did save her life was one of the medicines that was sitting bottled up in the Customs Office and could not be cleared readily because of the streams of red tape that were wound around it. Since then he has been a little more understanding."

Then he went on, "All our work in this hospital is charity, yet we can't get enough water. Yes, it's true—we can't get enough water to operate this institution, a hospital. We have to buy it on the black market."

He related many more tales and experiences that were very interesting but I just can't fill my book with them. I'm supposed to be telling you about Hunza—remember?

He insisted that we go home with him and meet his wife and children and break bread with him, which we did. His wife was a charming, delightful and ex-

ceptionally pleasant girl who made us feel very much at home and we had a delectable dinner with them.

If this young couple is a sample of the Seventh Day Adventists and their work, I think they should be highly commended. They are most certainly carrying out the Saviour's teachings.

Thursday morning bright and early we were at the reception office again, seeking an appointment with Mr. G. G. Khan. We didn't have long to wait. We were shortly ushered through the guards and upstairs to Mr. Khan's office.

"I'm having quite some difficulty contacting the right men in this instance," he said. "Some people are away on vacation, others are away on business and it is almost impossible to contact the necessary individuals. Therefore, I have so far been unable to get any definite word for you."

We were very disappointed at this and began to feel that they were giving us the old run-around.

It was then that I said, "I have been carrying with me from Canada some medicine for your President, Field Marshal Mohammed Ayub Khan. I am bringing this medicine on the suggestion and behest of a doctor in America who was in Pakistan about a year ago and who treated the President for an eye ailment and for some circulatory troubles. Believing that these medicines would perhaps be difficult to obtain in Pakistan, the good doctor suggested I bring them along and give them to the President. I thought perhaps you would contact the President's office or secretary and mention this to him and ask how he would like me to deliver the medicine. Therefore, when we come back tomorrow, perhaps you will have been in touch with the proper authorities and advise me what to do about this medicine I'm carrying."

Then Mr. Khan said, "I am quite sure that I will be able to talk to the right people today and you can expect definite word tomorrow."

With that we took our leave and as happened the two previous days, we were again entertained by the young men at the reception office with some pleasant conversation and tea.

They seemed to be more eager than ever to discuss various matters and details about Canada and asked if they could call to see me at my hotel and discuss the matter on a broader level. I told them that I'd be happy to welcome them and give them all the assistance I could and wrote down on my business card the name of the hotel and my room number.

By now we were getting to know the ropes and when we left the Office of the Ministry we easily found a tonga and made our way back to the hotel.

The rain that was pouring down when we arrived in Karachi on Monday night still continued intermittently and the whole area was flooded. I was told, and it was apparent, that Karachi's drainage and sewage systems were not geared to withstand heavy rainfalls and these unprecedented storms were creating floods and other serious complications.

That afternoon we took a taxi and asked to be driven to Jinnah's Tomb. We had been given a little warning about what to expect, but somehow no matter how you are told or forewarned about a situation, you never seem to get the right proportions. It's always either better or worse. We were prepared for the sights that met our eyes but inadequately and it could never be otherwise.

Jinnah's Tomb was a well-erected building or group of buildings with a courtyard where the actual tomb was supposed to be. Everything about the tomb, the

buildings, the enclave and the gardens was all that could be expected of it and did credit to the memory of a very noble man who gave most of his life unstintingly to the cause of his countrymen and coreligionists. But on all sides surrounding this well-appointed, beautiful area were sights and conditions that 'twould be better no human eyes beheld.

Row on row for hundreds of yards, and even miles, were hovels or abodes of one kind or another, made out of cardboard, wood, tin, metal, tarpaulins, boxes, cases, cans and I don't know what else. They were all sizes and shapes. The roofs of these abodes were made of every conceivable material, too—cloth, wood, cardboard, metal, tin, plastic, thatch and many other ingenuous contraptions that could in some measure help keep out either the sun or the rain. These shelters were occupied by the hundreds of thousands of Moslem refugees who had come into Pakistan from India.

It is admitted that we viewed this area at the worst possible time because it had been raining intermittently for days on end and at times there were heavy downpours. When these hovels had been erected, constructed or sprang into being, undoubtedly their only worry had been to keep out the sun.

These rooms, stalls or whatever you might call them averaged in size from about 5 feet square upward and they obviously sheltered anywhere from two to ten people—yes, I mean each individual enclosure.

Though it was still raining I had the urge to walk about and see exactly how these folks fared, so I strolled about through mud, garbage and debris—seeing, watching and learning. Some of them wore but a loin cloth, others had a little more clothing, perhaps a shirt and some type of trousers. The dirt, the filth, the garbage, the excrement surrounding it was nothing short

of calamitous. The water supply consisted of a tap at the front near Jinnah's Tomb and they all had to come there to get their supply which they carried away in cups, pails, cans, tubs and other containers.

In between this hodgepodge of huts and individuals roamed cows, dogs, sheep and goats. When I saw these various animals roaming about, I also cast my eyes in all directions to see if I could find or notice any means or source of supply of food for them, but again I could see absolutely nothing.

These animals, especially the goats, sheep and cows, obviously belonged to individuals and they kept them for milking purposes and I guess they would also have cheese . . . yes, and perhaps a bit of fuel from their dung. But there it is again, what did the animals eat? I saw no hay or straw or fodder of any kind, nor even a blade of grass. Yet the animals (the cows were mostly water buffalo) looked to be in a good physical condition. They did not appear to be thin, scraggy or undernourished.

I came away from that scene with the feeling that I had seen the human being at his lowest form of degradation. I am quite sure that in no stage of man's development has he ever been lower or filthier than that. Here again I am forced to admit that these people, wherever I saw them, didn't appear to be sad or mad at anyone. To the contrary, I was surprised or shocked to find that they were good-natured, they were smiling and they seemed to be happy. Innumerable children were playing about in the courtyards and forward areas, shouting happily and to all intents and purposes, having the time of their lives. There seemed to be little or no sign of bickering, quarreling or altercations of any kind.

I was told, but it seemed hard for me to believe, that

there were a million people in this area. Most certainly these tiny hovels or huts extended as far as the eye could reach and obviously, apart from the hygienic viewpoint, they seemed to be causing the authorities little or no difficulty.

I would have liked to find out more about the whole situation but just like many other things, man just hasn't got enough time in this short span of life to learn everything. He's lucky if he can learn one thing properly and thoroughly.

CHAPTER 8

Close to the Showdown

FRIDAY MORNING at 9 o'clock we were again at the reception desk of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and we went through the usual procedure of the man at the desk calling up to see if Mr. Khan would see us. When he said "Yes," the receptionist wrote out a chit or whatever it was and we were escorted upstairs in the usual fashion.

I have to admit that Mr. G. G. Khan, from the first time to the last time we saw him, was a gentleman, seemed very efficient and was never evasive, although for the past few days he had nothing of any great importance or value to tell us. He appeared to be honest, sincere and sympathetic. Frankly, I believe the man possesses great ability. But I was gaining the impression that he didn't have the required influence or power to do very much in our case.

"I have better news for you," he told us when we

sat down, "and I will soon have definite information concerning the disposition of the matter of your permit."

We were not greatly thrilled at this news that seemed so important to him. We were seeking a permit to get into Hunza and all these delays and palavers that were going on didn't seem to be moving our case forward very rapidly.

Then he went on, "Oh, you mentioned something about bringing medicine for the President when you were here yesterday. Do you have that medicine here with you now?"

"Yes," I replied, "I have it here in my briefcase."

"Well, if you'll leave it here, I'll see that the Presidents gets it."

So I unzipped my briefcase and stood the large and small bottles of medicine on G. G. Khan's desk. He thanked me for them and repeated that he would see to it that they were placed in the proper hands.

Then he went on and said, "If you will go back to your hotel, I will contact you there just as soon as I get the final details."

I must admit that the whole affair was beginning to take on a rather hopeless aspect for me. I could see now where I was never going to get that permit or at least, that just sitting and waiting and taking what they had to say and give was not going to get it through.

"Can't you give me a definite time as to when you will let me know? I would like to be there when you call and I don't want to hang around my hotel room *all* day if I don't have to. You know how it is, sometimes messages don't get through very promptly or efficiently and I'd rather not take that chance. So if you will tell me what time you will call, I'll be there waiting."

"Well, I can't be too sure," he countered, "but I'll call you either by 12 o'clock noon today or by 8.30 tomorrow morning."

I looked him full square in the eye . . . not just a casual look, but a piercing fixed look . . . and I echoed, "You will call me by 12 o'clock noon today or by 8.30 tomorrow morning, Saturday. Right?"

"That's correct," he said.

I got up from my chair where I was seated and stood up and shook hands with him. While I held his hand, I again looked right into his eyes and said, "Remember, you will call me by 12 o'clock today or at the latest, 8.30 tomorrow morning."

"That's right!" said G. G. Khan.

We walked towards the door. Actually it isn't a door, but a woven reed covering in the doorway. As I reached there, I turned around again and this time with all the expression that I could put into my eyes and voice, I repeated for the third time, "Remember, you're to call me by 12 o'clock today—noon—*or* not later than 8.30 tomorrow morning!"

"Agreed!" he replied.

I turned to Cecil as we got outside the door and started down the stairway and said, "I have a feeling that this time we will definitely hear from G. G. Khan."

Inwardly I was very angry and perturbed. I'd never been given the run-around like this before in my life. In American business circles these things aren't done. Now I'm not in politics, so I can't tell you whether or not these tactics are followed in Canadian or American politics or government administrative services. But certainly I had never encountered it in my business life and believe me, I didn't like it.

But one thing was sure and I had my mind made up . . . from that moment on I was not taking or brooking

any delay without a pitched battle.

Our usual friends were in the reception room expecting us and again tea was brought and served. The conversation as usual turned to America, in which they were acutely interested. We kept answering their questions about opportunities, government, climate and every other aspect that popped into their heads.

Shortly before we were ready to take leave, the young man with whom we had done most of the conversing, and who was a sharp-eyed, intelligent fellow, said, "How would you like to take me along with you to Hunza? I could act as your guide and interpreter."

"That's not a bad proposition," I said. "What do you think, Cec?"

"Sounds like a pretty fair idea," he replied.

"How would you get off from your work?" I threw at him.

"Oh, we'll discuss that and other aspects of it tomorrow when you come back."

"What makes you think we're coming back tomorrow?" I countered.

"Oh, you'll be back all right!" . . . and much as I didn't want to agree with him, I sort of felt that he knew what he was talking about, hoping at the same time that he was dead wrong but suspecting he was right. After all, he knew the ways of his people and the government better than I.

We took our leave and off we went back to the hotel.

We loitered in the lobby for a few minutes and I said to Cec, "What do you think of that idea of taking him along with us to Hunza? It would be costly because we'd have to pay his expenses, but maybe it would be worth it. He might save us a lot of time and maybe keep us out of difficulty. He's a pretty sharp boy!"

"Well, that thought has genuine merit," agreed Cecil, "although with the amount of money we're carrying, it might run us short."

"Well, we'll see what happens anyway," I said and with that we let the matter slide.

It seemed that we'd only been sitting around the lobby for a few minutes when I glanced up at the clock and noticed it was getting close to 12.

"Guess we'd better get up to the room, Cec. Who knows? We might get a call from G. G. Khan!"

Off we went at an accelerated clip for the elevator and we were taken up to the second floor by a dwarf, neatly attired in a hotel bellboy's or busboy's uniform. He was one of three dwarfs that were working at the hotel. They seemed normal in every way except in size, and they were handsome men, too. They looked to be well on in years but kept themselves fresh, neat and tidy looking . . . they were quite smart and moved with pep and vigor. Whenever I was downstairs in the lobby, I used to enjoy watching them.

Our room was almost a quarter of a mile from the elevator. That isn't as great an exaggeration as it sounds for the hotel proper took up what I would suggest would be a normal city block and we had two full lengths to encompass before we reached our room.

In the center was a well-appointed garden containing typical tropical trees, vines, shrubs and herbaceous plants. When you opened your room door and gazed out, you could readily imagine yourself being in the open country. This was indeed a blessing because the view from our front window looked out onto an uninviting city street with construction in various phases making it appear ugly and depressing.

We paraded down the long corridors of the balcony to our rooms.

We had just got into the room and shut the door when the phone rang. I answered it.

"This is G. G. Khan speaking. I would like to speak to Mr. Tobe."

"This is Mr. Tobe speaking," I said.

"I have for you the news that you have been waiting for."

"Good," I said, my spirits rising.

"Have you got a pencil and paper handy?"

"Yes, and ready to go," I answered. "Let's have it!"

"Tomorrow morning at 8.30 you are to see Captain Assad Ullakhan at the War Ministry."

I noted the name carefully in my notebook.

"I have made the appointment for you and presented your case as clearly and firmly as possible, not omitting any aspect in your favor. But the final answer must come from there. Good luck to you!"

"Thank you for your trouble," I said.

With that, he hung up.

CHAPTER 9

Trip to Hunza Fades

SATURDAY MORNING, a few minutes before 8 o'clock, we climbed into a cab outside the entrance to the Metropole Hotel. "To the office of the War Ministry!" I ordered.

Waiting below the stairs at the entrance of the Hotel were swarms of conveyances—bicycle rickshaws, tongas and motor taxicabs. At various times we tried all three modes of transportation, but this time we wanted to get there quick like a bunny so we decided on a taxi.

At the reception hut we told the man behind the desk we had an appointment with one Captain Ullakhan at 8.30 A.M. He summoned a bearer who was hanging around outside barefooted and, speaking in Urdu, instructed him to lead us to a specific place.

After 15 or 20 minutes of wandering about (our guide did not speak English) and asking questions of anyone we could see or find, we discovered that no one

knew anything about Captain Assad Ullakhan or where his office was located.

I was very much annoyed. Our appointment was for 8.30 and it was five or six minutes from that time right now. I was worried lest my man get away and I didn't want that to happen, no matter what. If we were late, he would have a legitimate excuse for not seeing us.

So we hurried back to the reception booth with the stupid guide behind us. I stormed at the man behind the desk, "This is utterly ridiculous. Don't tell me you don't know where this important man's office is located. If you cause me to lose my appointment, you will have great cause to regret it. Take us to Captain Assad Ullakhan's office instantly!"

He became ruffled and excited at my words and tone and said something to the guide that I'm sure wasn't very complimentary. Then controlling himself with great effort, he asked us if we would please follow this man again. Then the selfsame stupid guide took us around the building in a different direction and in sort of a wide circle. We wound up within 20 paces of the spot where we were before, but this time we found Captain Assad Ullakhan's office without difficulty. I couldn't for the life of me understand why the people he and we asked before couldn't tell us where it was. But that remains one of the deep mysteries of the East.

Captain Assad Ullakhan was a handsome young officer with a neat, well cared for moustache. He looked every bit as sharp, alert, clean and tidy as the best Western soldier could look. He spoke flawless English.

He was expecting us. He evidently had had many long conversations over the phone with G. G. Kahn and was completely familiar with the whole situation. But not wishing to take any chances on a mistake or an error, I outlined our position to the letter and also

mentioned clearly and distinctly that we had written to the President prior to leaving Canada and did not have time to receive a reply . . . but that a copy of the reply would undoubtedly be in the President's office and that his secretary could probably find it for us.

All this time we were sitting in an antechamber or waiting room adjacent to the office of the important officer, Ullakhan's superior, whom we as yet did not know. The floor was damp from the overflow rain water that had soaked most everything in the city. But it was clean and comfortable. A large fan hanging from the ceiling was circulating the air, making the room cool.

After observing the usual formalities and mouthing the few required niceties, he excused himself and said he'd be back in a few minutes. He returned shortly and said that his chief had been suddenly called away but that he would be back within an hour. In the meantime he informed us that he had put a call in to the President's office. Incidentally, the President was away at his summer home up near Murree in the foothills of the Himalayas in the northern part of the country. This I knew from the reports in the newspaper.

He also mentioned that he was getting all the details, files and information ready so that the matter could be placed entirely before his superior as soon as he got back and that there would be no trouble disposing of all matters promptly and efficiently. He then drew up a chair and sat down, and the three of us formed a triangle around the small table.

We chatted amiably and we learned that a good army friend and close relative of his had migrated to Canada and was now a captain in the Canadian armed forces.

I asked if he ever thought of going to Canada and

he replied, "My country needs me and I feel I have a duty to fulfill."

We continued our conversation while the minutes slipped by. The longer he spoke and gave his views and opinions, the better I liked him. Although he did nothing for us that I could see, I believed then, as I do now, that he was a credit to the Pakistan army and his country. He was quite young and he deserved to go a long way in his chosen profession.

He got up after a few minutes and said he would go and find out if any developments had taken place.

Then started a long wait . . .

It was after 11 o'clock and I had been sitting very uneasily and impatiently for a long time when Captain Assad Ullakhan came in, accompanied by a very distinguished, erect, stiff looking man dressed in fresh civilian clothes. The Captain introduced him as Lieutenant Colonel Abdul Latif, the man who had the power to O.K. or veto our hopes and plans for going into Hunza!

Before I had a chance to lay the case before him, he said, "I have all the details from Capt. Assad Ullakhan and from G. G. Kahn . . . and incidentally, Mr. G. G. Kahn made a very strong plea for you. I also want to say that he stressed the fact that the Commonwealth ties are important and that you were the first people from the Commonwealth who were seeking a permit. Therefore he felt that I should give the matter favorable consideration.

"However, although I am in sympathy with Mr. Kahn's views, this matter is a very serious one. The Hunza area is in a very strategic location. We consider it a most vital military zone and I cannot grant a permit to any foreigner to enter that territory."

I hardly expected the death blow to be that direct

but there was no mistaking Mr. Latif's meaning, his intent, or his decision.

"This matter," he said, "is strictly my responsibility and I will not allow anyone to enter that area and there must be no exceptions."

By now I realized the jig was up and feeling I had nothing to lose, I said, "And how long has this edict been in effect?"

"Well, it's been about two and one-half years since I've allowed anyone into Hunza."

I looked at him with almost a sneer on my face and snapped back with emphasis, "Either someone is lying or the American public has been badly duped because there was someone on a national television hookup less than a year ago who claimed to have been in Hunza. And let me tell you this. When I get back to America, I'm going to look into the matter and believe me, it will be given wide publicity. I doubt if any American television company would dare perpetrate such a hoax upon the millions of American people!"

He snapped his fingers and suddenly a man appeared. He said to him, "How long is it since I've issued a permit to go into Hunza?"

The man, who was evidently his secretary, hesitated . . . and the Colonel suggested, "Isn't it about two and one-half years?"

The man aped, "Yes, that's right—about two and one-half years!"

"No foreigner has been allowed to enter Hunza for about two and one-half years," I echoed, nodding my head and gazing at the ensemble one by one and pursing my lips in a more or less contemptive manner.

Then I went on speaking, rapping out each word most articulately, "It so happens, Colonel, that I have a letter in my possession right here and now from a

man who claims to have been in Hunza in July, 1958.

He was taken back at this clear-cut declaration and said, "Will you show it to me?"

"But definitely!" I snapped. I knew exactly where the letter was and it wasn't a moment before I yanked it out of my briefcase and popped it under his nose.

"I don't remember that name at all," he said. "I don't think he was ever here."

"Well, he might not have been here, but he certainly was in Hunza!" I snorted.

"I recall now something about a year ago when I gave a special permit to a man but I thought his name was Fisher or something," he said. "The request for permission came from the highest diplomatic sources in the United States and I could not very well refuse."

I said, "Then there *was* someone who got in within the last year!"

"Yes, but that's definitely over. No more permits into Hunza!"

"So," I continued, "an American can get into Hunza but a Canadian is refused! There is one rule for Americans and another for Canadians and we are Commonwealth brothers! I won't forget to pass word around in Canada so that they will know what to say when you want further aid under the Colombo Plan!"

I saw him squirm a bit and I went on, "Well, if that's your decision, there's nothing I can do about it, except the President may have a different opinion. Have you contacted the President's office for information about the reply to my letter or will I do it myself? Murree is on my route to Hunza!"

"We'll check immediately," . . . and this time both the Captain and the Colonel took leave of us, brusquely and briskly.

I paced the floor. I wanted to talk to my friend, Cec

but I didn't dare. I feared that they might overhear our conversation as the Colonel's office was on the other side of a door in the waiting room or they might have a microphone hidden somewhere. So I remained silent. But I was determined that from now on it was bite, kick, scratch, snarl, bluff, threats or whatever else might be necessary to try to gain my rightful end.

From what I had been told, they normally close up shop at one o'clock sharp on Saturdays. It was exactly 5 minutes after one by Cec's wristwatch when the Colonel and the Captain strode back into the room. The Colonel had a crestfallen appearance about him. He wasn't nearly as cocky or sure of himself or as bold as he was a few minutes ago.

My mind raced and I wondered what was up. The truth of the matter was that I had no knowledge that the President had replied to my letter. I just expected that common courtesy would call for a reply either from the President himself or from his secretary. Therefore, when I made the statement that there must be a copy of a letter to me in their files, I was basing it on an assumption . . . I had no knowledge that this was the case. But I certainly hoped so anyway.

The Colonel, in a mild voice and courteous manner, asked us to be seated and then he took his place opposite us. It was obvious and clear that he wasn't the same man he was when he left that room just 15 minutes before.

In fairness, and to do justice to a fine gentleman and soldier, I must state that the permit issued prior to mine was given on specific instructions from the President, Field Marshal Mohammed Ayub Kahn. Therefore Lieutenant Colonel Abdul Latif spoke the truth when he told us that he had not allowed anyone to enter Hunza for two and one-half years.

CHAPTER 10

The Permit — Verbal

I REALIZED QUICKLY, when Lieutenant Colonel Latif asked us to be seated, by the look on his face, that something had gone wrong and that things were not turning out as he would have liked. The discomfiture of the Lieutenant Colonel might be well understood if you remember that in October of 1957 Field Marshal Mohammed Ayub Kahn, who was then a general, had, in a coup d'état, overthrown the existing administration and taken power and was now ruling Pakistan under martial law as President.

It was conceded even by some of his most bitter opponents and those who oppose dictatorships of any type that Field Marshal Mohammed Ayub Kahn was doing a mighty good job and he had turned what had been chaotic conditions into a fairly clean businesslike administration.

There was no sign or indication of dictatorship and

the people in general were well-satisfied and the political and civil situations were well under control. Administrative functions were operating comparatively well—obviously much better and more efficiently than before the coup. President Kahn showed no sign of personally assuming the stance or power of a dictator. In fact, he is one of the most undictator-like dictators in history.

He was a sworn enemy of bureaucracy and was determined to stamp out the laissez faire attitude that was so prevalent in most Asiatic countries. Just the day before I had read in the Pakistan newspapers that 10,000 officials had been dismissed by the Field Marshal for inefficiency and all ranks, from the lowest to the highest, were involved. Wherever inefficiency was suspected or proven, sweeping changes and dismissals were made.

Perhaps the Lieutenant Colonel had this knowledge in mind when he came into the room and asked us to sit down. He announced in a rather serious tone, "I have been in touch with the President's secretary and he found your letter. There was a notation made on it in the President's own hand for you to be afforded access into Hunza and be given every cooperation from the department involved."

Then he added, with clear reluctance, "I have nothing to do but follow the President's directive, even though I personally consider the location a most strategic one and one which I believe, in the best interests of all concerned, no one should be allowed to enter."

I remained silent. The miracle that had transpired elated me beyond words. Oh, how I would have loved to have succumbed to that childish delight of thumbing my nose in the good Lieutenant Colonel's face and given him the old horse laugh! But I remained abso-

lutely cool and kept saying to myself, "Hold tight! Hold tight! Show no emotion. Don't do anything that may spoil things!"

I then went on to say that from the recommendations I had from people who were or had been closely associated with the President, it was my belief that he would grant us a permit to visit Hunza, especially as my visit or the purpose of it had neither political nor international connections. My intended visit was purely for humanitarian and scientific purposes.

It was now well after 1 o'clock and the Colonel went on, "Now if you will come back on Monday, I will arrange with the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs to have the permit prepared for you and you can pick it up then."

For this statement I was totally unprepared. I had expected that he would write me out a chit, an affidavit or a letter to the effect that I was given a permit to enter the territory of Hunza and this I would carry with me to my destination. But now he was again deferring me until Monday and by Monday many things could happen! I could not afford the delay and I was not content to wait until then.

Now I don't know why I acted as I did. My mind was racing like crazy. A seeming miracle had placed my goal in my hands and now I was about to lose it again. I arose from my chair slowly, reached for and picked up my heavy, well-packed briefcase. Then I said to Cecil, "Come on, Cec. Let's get going. There's no use wasting time here."

I turned to Lieutenant Colonel Latif and with firm and carefully chosen words, I said, "I will *not* come back on Monday. You have toyed and played with me long enough. I started out in a proper businesslike way to seek a permit to enter Hunza on Tuesday, they told

me to come back Wednesday, then come back Thursday, come back Friday, come back Saturday and now it's come back Monday . . . from the Department of Information to the Department of the Interior, from the Department of the Interior to the Exterior, from Exterior to Foreign Affairs, Foreign Affairs to War Ministry, from the War Ministry to the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs . . . and who knows how many departments and ministries we will have to go through yet!

"And now even after you have the President's specific instructions, you tell me to come back on Monday!" Here I stopped for a few seconds and banged my fist on the small table, almost shattering it. "Do you think I have a lifetime to waste among a group of inefficient so-called public servants? We are off to Murree as quickly as we can get a train or a plane and I will call upon the President himself and relate the situation to him in detail."

Like magic a transformation took place. Both he and the Captain sought to placate us, to quiet us, to assure us that everything would be all right. They apologized for the delay and for the difficulty caused us and said they would make provisions so we could proceed immediately to our destination.

I then stated that on Friday I had already made our reservations to go by rail to Rawalpindi (and the best I could procure was first class seats to Lahore on Sunday and open tickets to "Pindi") for it had been my intention to proceed with or without his consent. I knew that the President's summer home was in Murree in the foothills of the Himalayas just north of Rawalpindi and I told Latif that I had intended visiting the President at his summer home to deliver some medicine I had brought for him from Canada and to ask his aid in procuring the elusive permit. (The medi-

cine had already been left with Mr. G. G. Khan of the Foreign Ministry.)

What's more, if I had waited until now to arrange my transportation to "Pindi", it would have taken at *least* 3 or 4 days to procure accommodations, a delay that I could ill afford, with the limited time at my disposal.

The Colonel waited for me to finish my outburst and then calmly yet eagerly interjected, "It will be quite in order for you to proceed to your intended destination. We will notify the Ministry of Kashmir Affairs in Rawalpindi to facilitate your entry into the territories requested."

We were then invited to accompany him to his private office where he showed us in detail the restricted strategic areas on a large, well-defined map hanging on the wall behind his desk. He then ordered tea to be brought in and in the meantime we continued to follow the red line that was marked on the map which was the line that could not be crossed by any foreigner or even by a Pakistani from outside this territory. It was the line marking off Hunza from the rest of Pakistan.

"It is a fact," he went on to explain, "that even though much pressure had been brought to bear upon me, I refused to allow a German mountain climbing expedition into Hunza. They are now somewhere around Rakaposhi in Nagir, but it was distinctly specified that they remain on the Nagir side of the river. There is also a Swiss expedition in the area and an Italian one, too, none of whom are allowed to cross into Hunza. Nor are they permitted to hire Hunzan bearers. Therefore you can readily understand that I was not being restrictive only in your case."

By the time we had our tea, I had learned many pertinent details about the territory and we parted the

best of friends!

Whatever the situation was or will be in the future I must admit that Lieutenant Colonel Latif was a capable, intelligent officer and that his aide-de-camp, Captain Assad Ullakhan, is a splendid soldier of high caliber and intelligence.

Now when I recall the incident, I feel ashamed. What right did I have to even think of belittling or bringing to ridicule a man who was doing his duty as he saw fit? . . . a soldier both efficient and capable who was following his learning and instincts to administer a most difficult department?

CHAPTER 11

Karachi to Lahore

Now That We Knew for sure we would be getting into Hunza and therefore traveling North, Cec suggested that we drop in at the air lines office to see if we could get a reservation on a flight to Rawalpindi.

While we had already made a reservation on the train to Lahore and from Lahore to "Pindi", Cec felt that we would make much better time via air. There was no doubt about it, taking the train to Lahore and Rawalpindi would take at least two days—if all went well and we could get a train out of Lahore to "Pindi" before too long—whereas the air lines would fly us right to Rawalpindi in a matter of something like 5 hours. As it turned out later, we would have gained nothing by taking the plane rather than the train, as no plane had been able to take off from Rawalpindi to Gilgit for 9 days.

However, at this stage of the game, I was having no

part of a plane ride. The reason was that I had not come all the way from America to Pakistan just to hop from place to place by plane without seeing the country.

Admittedly the cities were interesting. They were ever so much different from our Western cities. But I came specifically to see the country and I wanted to see and know what the countryside of Asia looked like . . . and hopping from city to city by plane was by no means the answer as far as I was concerned.

I have traveled by all of the known means of transportation—airplane, ship, train, motorbus, jeep, car, horse and yak. Each and every one of them has its definite place in our modern civilization. For short distances I prefer a motorcar or a bus. For longer overland distances I prefer the train. To cross the oceans, the passenger steamships cannot be improved upon. And where speed is essential for long distances, the airplane has its definite place. But for the Hunza territory and like terrain, jeep, horse and yak are applicable.

I have never felt comfortable in an airplane, even when you include the phony or forced charm of the beautiful hostesses. By and large, I prefer the train if I want to see the lay of the land, the people, the farms and the country.

We were distinctly warned, both in the railway office and by the newspapers, that in traveling by train we would run the risk of delays due to washed-out railway lines, for the floods caused by the monsoons had reached devastating proportions, a sample of which we had seen in Karachi. But instead of lessening my desire to travel by train, I felt that now I wanted to go that way more than ever . . . so I could see the effects of the monsoons and the chaos they had wrought so quickly.

Departure time for the train to Lahore, as we were told by the ticket agent, was 9.30 P.M. When one is traveling so far afield, it is wise to take no risks and to be at the airport or the railway station plenty early. We and our luggage were plunked down on the station platform, track 6, at 10 minutes to 9.

We chose a place where we thought the train might stop. The trains and stations of Pakistan reminded me of the subways in New York City . . . you stand on the platform and you never know exactly, or even approximately, where the wheeled steel monster is going to come to rest.

A flock of laden coolies paraded by us. At the direction of a young man attired in hunting or camping togs, they chucked their bundles in a heap not 10 feet from us. This young man and his companion were taking the same train as we and their wives, relatives and friends had come to bid them adieu.

One of the wives, a beautiful sultry-looking damsel wearing sleek slacks that showed her curves and proportions to the *n*th degree, kept flinging her arms around her young husband and whispering endearments. I suspect it was her intent to make him wish he wasn't going, or to induce him to hurry back. I don't know what it did for her departing husband—whether or not it whetted his desires—but it certainly gave me a most uncomfortable period, especially as the love scene she enacted on the station platform kept haunting my vision and raising havoc with my desires.

There was no place to sit so we had to stand or walk and, walking being much easier than standing, Cec and I took turns parading up and down the station platform. One of us always remained standing right beside or sitting on top of our baggage.

I, being much nosier than my friend Cec, ventured

further afield and stuck my nose into anything that might give off an air of interest or adventure. At the moment I was also looking for the men's room. Eventually, towards the extreme end of the platform, I saw a sign that said *Lavatory*. I headed in that direction. The platform had a ramp leading towards the outbuilding. I walked on and as I made the turn to enter the enclosure, the stench stopped me dead. One glimpse was enough. I turned around and walked back up the platform and decided I would seek comfort further afield.

It was 10 minutes after 10 before the train arrived and I was more than delighted to see that it was a topnotch conveyance in every way—clean, shiny and streamlined.

A cavalcade of coolies descended upon us and I had to beat them off and select one to help us with our baggage.

Our luggage consisted of the following: two medium sized suitcases, ideally suited for air travel because they were light, one duffle bag, one knapsack, one briefcase, one airline shoulder bag, one shoulder-type dictating machine, two cameras and one radio.

Cec and I each strung a camera over one shoulder. Then Cec draped the airline bag that he was carrying over his other shoulder and I did the same with my dictating machine. Cec carried the radio that I was taking to the Mir of Hunza and I kept my hand always on my briefcase, in which my documents and all-important papers were cached. The one coolie could easily handle the two suitcases and the duffle bag, but he tried to avoid carrying more than one piece. I barked at him and he grabbed the other two. I picked up the knapsack and prodded the coolie along towards the standing train.

Our reservations were in order and the accommodations, the air conditioning and the general comforts provided on the train were equal to the best I had found in America. Little or nothing was left to be desired as far as transportation services were concerned.

We got ourselves comfortably established and waited to hear the train start, but it was not until 10.30 that it began to move. No, I didn't become angry or perturbed because the train didn't pull out on time, for the simple reason that I had read practically every day in the Karachi papers about the disrupted train connections, the washed out rails and serious difficulties that the floods of the monsoon season had caused. Besides, we were too comfortable to complain.

At every stop en route I got out of the coach and mingled with the throngs and each and every time it was an experience. The people used the station platforms, which were usually made of cement, as beds. Each and every platform was the same—crowded with from a few dozen to hundreds of sleeping bodies. Most slept on the hard cement without anything between them and it. Some had a rag or so under them, others a sheet or two of burlap and others had a blanket or a kind of rag mattress. Yet, their sleep seemed to be sound, peaceful and untroubled. And there were men, women and children, even infants, although women were not very plentiful. All throughout my visit in Pakistan and India women were conspicuous by their absence. Most of those I did see seemed to be woebegone, bedraggled, starved, haggard and old beyond their years.

At every station stop there were any number of hucksters or peddlers, as well as the permanent stands offering tea, refreshments, books, magazines, newspapers and such.

The dining car had already been closed for the night and we would have gladly welcomed an opportunity to have a cup of tea at one of the station platform booths but who would dare, with all the warnings we'd had about various forms of dysentery, especially the amoebic type?

Later on I began to get desperate and did have a few cups of tea at the stands at the station platforms. But I quit suddenly when I saw their method of washing their cups or glasses. They usually had a metal container or pot of some kind in which they washed their utensils or dishes. Well, after I saw them pour the contents of the cups into this container and then rinse quickly and bring them out, I decided that this was not for me. So that was the last cup of tea or any other refreshment that I took a chance on at the station platform booths.

I do believe that the Pakistani or Indian people are the world's most handsome folk. They have finer, more delicate features than I have found anywhere in my travels. However, I could not say nearly as much for their habits of hygiene and cleanliness.

It was a long night of travel—at least for me, because I can't sleep very well on any conveyance, whether it be an airplane or Pullman.

It was a long haul by rail from Karachi to Lahore, a distance of almost 800 miles. It took us almost 24 full hours to do it!

At the first sign of light that appeared in the sky I was sitting by the window to get my fill of the scenery and countryside.

From informants I questioned during my travels I gathered that there are between 70,000,000 and 80,000,000 people in Pakistan. No recent census has been taken as far as I know and even if they did have one,

it wouldn't be very accurate for various reasons.

As you probably know, Pakistan is a part of old India, being probably not more than one-eighth the land size of what was old India. Into this rather small area are crowded that great number of people, most of whom infest the cities. This stood out in bold relief as the train hummed along the rails. On both sides for miles, as far as the eye could reach, in every direction were vacant fields. Only occasionally and in certain specific areas were the fields cultivated or should I say even suitable for cultivation!

We were passing through at monsoon time when floods are common and to be expected. But this was a little worse than normal, according to reports.

A large part of the distance we traveled from Karachi to Lahore was made up of semiarid or desert-like wastes. However I did notice irrigation ditches throughout the entire area that we traversed. Water didn't seem to be a problem. Whether or not this land is arable, I am not in a position to say. But I have felt that as long as ample supplies of water were available, land could be made to produce.

I questioned many people—practically all who took an active part in business or government life could speak English. They were of the opinion that the masses did not like the land and preferred to live in the cities, even at a semistarvation level. At first this situation appalled me. But then I realized that we in America are not much different. There has been a gradual but positive swing towards the urban areas and the farms and villages are being deserted.

Sitting with us in the comfortable coach of the train was a young, well-informed newspaperman, one Khursheed-Ut-Hasan. He was a representative of one of the largest and best known newspapers in Pakistan. I told

him what I had seen of the refugees and wondered if something couldn't be done to relieve that terrible situation, especially as I had traveled through hundreds of miles of land that was not even being put to any use.

This young man told me, "Shortly after partition, when the refugee problem was most pressing, the government worked out a scheme whereby they took thousands of acres of land and divided it into small holdings. On each holding they built a small hut."

"Admittedly," he went on, "these abodes were not luxurious, but they were definitely a thousand times better than the type of dwellings and squalor in which the refugees were living in the cities. To each of these holdings they gave the necessary farm implements and farm animals and provided the necessities of life to get any willing or enterprising man and family started. But strange to relate, there were very few willing volunteers to go on the land . . . yes, even from among those starved, diseased people who were actually driven, in most cases, from other parts of India by the Hindus because they were Mohammedans. When they were offered a new start in life on a small farm, did they respond? No!"

"It was terrible to behold," he went on. "Most of them refused to volunteer to go to live on these holdings, even with all of the necessities that the government had provided. Then the government resorted to a more or less compulsory measure and they herded thousands of these people onto trains to take them to these new settlements. In this manner, tens of thousands of these expatriated refugees were put on farms. But did they remain there? No, they refused to stay on the land!

"But for a mere handful of the many thousands that

were put on the farms, they all fled and converged on the cities again, to go back to the life of filth, disease and squalor. Therefore the elaborate, far-seeing, ambitious plan of the government, which spent millions of hard-to-get dollars, resulted in a ghastly failure!"

He told of the decision of the government to clear out the slum areas in the large cities and place these derelicts by compulsion aboard trains bound for the rural areas. But at every stop or even between stops when the train slowed down, they would jump off by the hundreds until, when the train reached its destination, a mere handful of the original group of repatriates was left to disembark. These, in most cases, were women and children or the old or the weak and the maimed who could not, because of these reasons, get away.

It was clear that these millions of people, chiefly refugees from India, would rather live in filth and beg, scrounge and even die rather than lead an agrarian existence.

To me, who has spent the greater part of my life living in a small town or on a farm, this was beyond my understanding. I would not trade a crust of bread earned from living on the land for the wealth of Croesus. But by the look of things throughout the world, it seems that about 90 people out of 100 do not share my love of the country or my views.

CHAPTER 12

'Pindi or Bust

IT TOOK US SOMEWHAT LONGER than 24 hours to reach Lahore. I'd had from 6 o'clock in the morning until it grew dark at about 8.30 to see the sights. See the sights I did. There was much to observe and note.

We had no fault whatsoever to find with the train ride. Even the meals served in the dining car were satisfactory. However the service and the food could not be compared with that in the luxurious dining cars of America. Here service lacked the polish and the pomp of that offered in the Western dining cars. Yet we again registered no complaints for it was served without delay and it was edible and nourishing.

Whenever you disembark from a plane, a train or a cab, your luggage would be pounced upon by a horde of coolies, ranging from 3 to 6 in number. They would divide it in such a manner that every coolie present would be carrying something so that each would be

entitled to a tip and they usually demanded at least a rupee each.

I learned quickly—I found that either you had to learn quickly or die. When these gangs of scallawags descended upon us, I boldly and sternly intervened and selected one coolie to carry our luggage. Even though they didn't understand a word I was saying (at least, they pretended not to) I told them that I would pay only one coolie, no matter how many shared our belongings.

As a matter of fact, if I couldn't make them understand and two or more coolies did carry our luggage, I still paid only one and when I handed the rupee or such to the coolie, I would say, "Here it is and the devil take the hindmost!"

I don't think the coolies appreciated this, but I was determined that I wasn't going to be made a sucker by these ginks who were looking for easy money.

We instructed our taxi driver to take us to Falleties Hotel and were sorely troubled and disappointed when upon arrival there, we found that, not having a reservation, there was no room for us. They suggested a place close by. Our taxi man took us to the establishment and left us there after unloading our luggage.

Oh, how I wished he'd stayed another minute. After seeing the rooms, I would have had him take us to another hotel. This was certainly not a first, second or third class hotel by any stretch of the imagination! It was neither dirty nor filthy, or any such thing. It was just that our room was something like a garage and the bathroom facilities left, oh, so much to be desired.

"But shucks," Cec remarked, "one night here won't kill us."

Cec went to bed and I moseyed out into the streets for a walk. 'Twas getting close to midnight but I had

to have my constitutional promenade, if humanly possible, before going to bed. The streets of Lahore looked dingy, dark and foreboding and the roads were torn up all around me, but I still felt that I had to get out and walk and get out I did! If Cec was in the mood for a walk on these occasions, he came along. If he was tired or indisposed, I went by myself.

I'll admit that walking at night alone in a city or town or anywhere else is not necessarily the healthiest occupation in the world, from the point of view of prowlers and such. But I've reached middle age without being attacked or murdered so I don't think there's as much danger to it as some people make out.

I didn't find much company in the street at this time. In fact, in most places throughout the world, when it gets close to midnight, there are very few people in sight. There wasn't any amount of vehicular traffic about either, although I did see a stray tonga every now and then.

On these various jaunts that I took I always made sure that I learned the name of the hotel at which we were staying in case I got lost and had to ask my way back, for this has happened on a few occasions in my travels!

These pre-retiring walks, wherever possible, usually took about an hour, seldom less but often more. Besides observing whatever there was to see wherever I went, I used to skim over mentally the events of the day to consider whether or not I had acted wisely or unwisely and then I'd plan the next day's activities wherever possible.

Through years of trial and error, I found that if I retired immediately or shortly after my arrival, I would find my mind was too active, mentally rehashing the events of the day. Thus, I wouldn't get to sleep very

easily. But if I took a brisk or even a leisurely walk and allowed the mental processes to function, when I got back I invariably went right to sleep and rested comfortably. I find that I can think much better while walking than in any other position. When you consider the various reasons, I think that you, too, will agree that thinking and walking are complementary to each other. The striding motions and actions of the body promote good circulation and alertness and when is a man more capable of thinking than when his mind and body are receptive and alert?

On this stroll there was little to be seen and the street lights were few and far between. When walking, I always prefer to walk in a circuitous manner so that I will avoid retracing my steps. But I didn't know the locality that I was in well enough to risk losing my way. So after I had walked about half an hour, I began to retrace my steps. I did, at least, walk along the other side of the street before returning to my garage-like hotel.

We arose at 7 and before 8 o'clock presented ourselves for breakfast in the dining room, which really wasn't much of a dining room. Our breakfast consisted of some oatmeal, toast, a bit of jam and coffee.

Then I asked the proprietor if there was a phone in the establishment and he said there was. I asked for permission to use it and he escorted me outside to a sort of balcony. The phone was contained in a box that sat on a table, and he had to get a key to unlock the box to get the phone out. I phoned to the air lines office and there was no accommodation available to Rawalpindi, nor could I get any promise even for the next day. I then telephoned the railway station and, whether it was too early or whether it was the difficulties they were having because of the floods, I could

get no satisfaction.

I came back and told Cec that the only course left for us was to go over to the station ourselves and see exactly what we had to face and contend with. We ascertained that the station was about two miles away and that sounded like just a splendid morning's walk for me. Off we went!

It was a fairly busy thoroughfare and people were coming and going to their offices or other work and trucks, tongas and rickshaws were part of the scene.

We passed an establishment that looked like a huge estate with a brick wall about 3 feet high all around it. It was some type of building that belonged to the railways. No, it was not a depot or a storehouse, but had something to do with employees or offices.

I was walking on the opposite side of the street when something caught my eye. I don't know why but there was something about the peculiarity of the position of what appeared to be a human being that attracted my attention. I went across to get a better look.

I found a man performing his morning ablutions in what he assumed to be his establishment. It consisted of an area dug into the ground about one foot deep, about 3½ feet wide and 6 feet long, starting from the brick wall. He had some rags in the bottom to form a mattress and some other rags for a cushion. He had all his worldly belongings with him, placed in little boxes that were studded along the side and in the corners of his coffin-like abode. Over the top he had a sort of canopy made of some kind of cloth held up by a few sticks. He looked as contented as could be and was probably as snug as a bug in a rug. The location was more or less high and dry, considering all the rain that had fallen in the last few days.

I was so intrigued to see how one man had solved the

housing shortage that I would have stayed there many more minutes, but Cec prodded me with, "We'd better get to the station!"

We started out again and doubled the pace at which we had been moving prior to stopping. After about 15 minutes at this fast walking pace we were there.

We went to the ticket office to inquire about passage to Rawalpindi. The clerk said if we did not have a reserved ticket, then there was no use; the train was overcrowded and we had no alternative but to wait. Further, he could give us no definite time or date as to when we could get a reserved passage.

This was most unsatisfactory. I left the wicket and walked over to the station manager's booth. I waited a minute or two before I could see him and when I did begin to talk to him, he gave me the information or the inkling that I needed. He said, "You have a ticket on our train for Rawalpindi and therefore our train has to carry you."

Then he went on, "I'd best tell you that the rail line from here to Rawalpindi has been disrupted and the trains cannot get through because of the floods. So what we are doing as an alternative is to go back 90 miles to Khanewal and from there take another spur line to Rawalpindi."

The thought of going back 90 miles and then retracing another 90, which meant a total of 180 miles out of our route, almost floored us. But there certainly was no sense in waiting. So we told him we'd like to take that train.

"It will be leaving here at 9.30. Are you ready?"

We looked up at the station clock and it was a quarter to nine.

"No, we're not ready but we will be when that train leaves here! Thanks very much for the information," I

said and Cec and I shot off to the station entrance where we knew we could find a taxi or tonga.

We grabbed the first one in sight (it was a tonga) and had the driver whip up the horse to get to our hotel. Then we told him to wait. We packed up, paid up and were back waiting on the platform by 9.15.

When the train pulled in almost on time (very unusual) we dragged our luggage aboard and ensconsed ourselves in a first class compartment. We weren't there more than a couple of minutes, nicely seated and comfortable (of course the train hadn't started yet) when one of the train men came in and said, "I'm sorry but you can't have this compartment. It is reserved."

He took us outside the door and showed us where the people's names had been inscribed on a document which was affixed to the compartment wall. We had no alternative but to leave.

We parked our luggage in the passageway and I said to Cec, "You stay here with the luggage and don't get off, even if they try to use force. You stay right where you are. I'll go and see the station manager and who else I can to see if we can get some kind of accommodations."

I went from office to office and pillar to post but it did me no good. I even had the support of an army officer who could not get accommodations. He was lucky enough to get a place for his wife and children but for himself he couldn't get first class accommodations.

We even demanded that they put an extra car on but our demand was not met!

CHAPTER 13

We Meet Mahmud

THERE WAS NO HELP for us. All my rantings, ravings and threats and those of the military officer failed. They just didn't have another coach they could put on and therefore we had to ride second class or not at all.

Afterwards, when I had time to think matters over, I felt that we were doggone lucky to be able to get space in the second class compartment because there was a third class coach, you know, and that was a heck of a lot worse. In fact, it would have been utterly unbearable to be forced to ride third class, from what we saw of the third class coaches.

When we got into the second class compartment, we found it was much better than we had anticipated. The only apparent difference was that the first class coaches were air-conditioned, whereas the second class were not. Apart from that the accommodations seemed to be quite the same.

In truth, I didn't expect that my rantings and ravings would be successful but somewhere along the line one of the top station employees had told me that if we kicked up a big enough fuss, they would be compelled to put on another car. Obviously they just didn't have another to put on and that was that!

We were not the only passengers inconvenienced because, when I went into the second class compartment, I found that we had distinguished company. There was a lawyer and judge from a district in Punjab, a young newspaper man and beekeeper and a military officer. Both the military officer and the lawyer-judge had servants along with them. The latter remained outside in the corridor and I understand that somewhere on the train they had a compartment that was maintained especially for servants.

Of the three—the lawyer-judge, the military officer and the young newspaper man-beekeeper from Swat, the last was the least impressive. It is given to some to have their qualities on the exterior . . . his were many but mainly on the interior. He was a man of small stature with curly black hair and the disposition of a saint.

First the officer and I had a long discussion about everything in creation and the others listened. Then his servant came and told him he was wanted in his wife's first class compartment. He left immediately and I did not see him again.

At that time I began a very interesting conversation with the judge-lawyer. He was a most intelligent individual, clad in native costume of snow white garments. We discussed the new state of Pakistan, conditions under India and conditions under the British. It was a delight to hear his views and listen to him speak. His English was almost perfect.

Then I, indiscreetly, but with definite intent, mentioned Israel . . . and he was off! I did not seek to defend Israel nor the West for supporting her. I just wanted to hear how a Pakistani Mohammedan felt about it. It was clear and obvious that the Mohammedans did not want and if humanly possible, would not tolerate any foreign religion in their midst. He accused us, as Canadians, as well as the Americans and the British, of forcing the state of Israel upon Mohammedan people. Even though I didn't agree with him, I was very pleased to have heard his views.

A few hours later he reached his destination. He shook hands all around and then took off to the platform where a large crowd of well-wishers was waiting to welcome him back home.

Now there were just Cec, myself and the young curly-headed, angelic dispositioned chap left and we took full advantage and liberty of the situation. As though made to order, there happened to be three bunks in the compartment, suspended like sleepers from the walls of the car.

As I said before, the only difference we could find between the first class and the second class was that the first class had air-conditioning which meant the windows and doors were kept tightly shut. Here, because there was no air conditioning and the heat was terrific, we had to keep windows and doors open and this brought in dust from the fields . . . and we were coated with it! So was everything in the compartment. But we all decided that we'd just have to live with it.

While the fields were flooded and inundated, covering vast areas all along the route, the road bed of the railway track, as well as the vehicular road and the higher fields, were quite dry after 2 or 3 days of sunshine. So there was plenty of dust below, around and

through the open windows of the train. Incidentally, I'd like to mention that while we paid for first class tickets and rode a good share of the rail line second class, we did not get a refund.

Our new young friend's name was Mahmud Butt and what a delight and jewel he turned out to be! Either there are millions of splendid, wonderful, grand and glorious people throughout the world or I'm just lucky enough to bounce into them.

He asked me if I liked mangoes. I said that I loved them and I'd eaten them often in America, whenever I could procure them. Cec had never tasted them. Mahmud reached under the seat and brought forth a whole large wicker basket of them and boy, did I take to those mangoes! Yummy!

Cec was a little doubtful about them. We had been warned about eating uncooked foods and Cec declined the mangoes, but I ate 3 or 4. The only criticism one might have against mangoes is the difficulty in getting through the skin. The natives learn to suck them and manage to get all of the good out of them through just a tiny hole on top, just like one would suck an orange. But the mango hide is much tougher than that of an orange. I quickly learned how to eat them, although after each one I needed a bath. Believe me, it was worth it!

Right from the time we left Karachi, at every stop I'd get off and wander about the station platform indiscreetly prying everywhere. On some of these short excursions Cec accompanied me, but I got off each time whether Cec came with me or not.

Up until now I hadn't dared to do the many things I wanted to do. But now that I had young Mahmud Butt with me, I could afford to take liberties and we even got so daring that we'd get off and wander about

at whistle stops. We'd have tea at one stop, a soft drink at another, some of their various saccharine-made candies and an occasional cookie or cake, too. Mahmud was our sounding board. He'd make sure that everything we got was as good and as clean as it could be. And the crazy fool insisted upon paying for everything. We threatened to beat his brains out if he didn't stop. Even when we did plunk our pay down, he threw something at them in Urdu and they refused to take our money.

At a place called Jhelum there was a fairly long stop. I was fascinated watching the throngs milling about the station platform and the sleeping bodies covering the pavement, so thick that you could hardly walk. You had to tread cautiously, putting your feet alongside of either their ears or nose. I was afraid on many occasions that I would stomp on one of the noses. But they slept on as contentedly and peacefully as babies. They didn't have a care or a worry in the world—except starving to death! In many places the emaciated bodies lying in the corners and corridors gave one an uncomfortable feeling. As a Westerner from a land of plenty I felt almost guilty.

We'd spent so much time looking about this special station and had walked to the extreme end of the platform (Cec had gone back to the train earlier) that when the train blew, we didn't realize it was the second whistle and we began to move casually along towards the train. Then it began to move and we knew it was the second whistle and not the first. We'd missed the first one!

We had to run with all our strength and might to catch on before we hit the end of the platform. There were only a few meager feet to spare and then we'd have been off into space.

I didn't believe I was capable of moving so quickly because it'd been years since I'd done any sprinting. Then, too, the run assumed the proportions of a hurdle race as we had to take care to avoid the prostrate sleeping bodies. But Lady Luck was still with us and we hopped onto the train step and clutched the hand rail firmly. We were fortunate and Cec said something about "fools" or "stupid so and so's" when we got on. He felt sure we'd missed the train.

I saw and learned more about Pakistan and its people from the moment Mahmud came into the picture than I had during all the time I'd spent in Pakistan. He explained their religion, their habits, their ways and means, their foibles, until I felt that I had known the people and Mahmud all my life.

Because of Mahmud Butt, the long hours of riding on a dusty train became actually pleasant. When at last we were getting close to Rawalpindi, I wished that we still had many miles to go.

Mahmud's chief occupation was that of a farmer-beekeeper in Swat and he made us promise faithfully that we would come to see him on our way back from Hunza.

It was part of our plan to go to Kabul in Afghanistan on our return from Hunza. Well, in order to get to Kabul you go from Rawalpindi to Peshawar and then proceed from Peshawar to Kabul, crossing the famed Khyber Pass en route. Mahmud pointed out to us that we would obviously have to wait in Peshawar for a means of transportation to get us to Kabul because there is neither train nor plane service from anywhere into Kabul, except a flight from Karachi. From Peshawar there were buses that would take you to Kabul. Maybe you can fly also from some points in Russia or elsewhere, but from the detailed informa-

tion that I was able to get, the only means of getting into Kabul was as I have outlined. As a matter of fact, we took the trouble of going to see the Afghanistan Consul in Peshawar and got our documents arranged so we could take the bus. But after examining the buses and studying the situation, we gave it up and instead hired a taxi to take us the distance of approximately 190 miles up and 190 miles back. That was a ride that both Cec and I will never, never forget.

Mahmud certainly wanted us to come and pay him a visit and he informed me that he would make all provisions to make our stay with him for a few days comfortable and pleasant. Evidently sensing the Western need or desire for toilet facilities, he said he would provide comfortable commode chairs or stools for our convenience. He was so anxious to have us come that I definitely promised I would, if at all possible.

Then he told me about his disrupted, eventful life and I listened intently and with profound interest while he related that he had given up a prosperous, comfortable living in Kashmir (the part that was held by India) to live in Pakistan. He had been a correspondent for one of the larger newspapers and besides, did quite a bit of free-lance writing. But with the unsettled conditions in Pakistan, he felt that a business would offer greater security and therefore he settled in Swat and became an apiarist, or beekeeper and in a short few years he had built up a thriving trade on packaged honey. I told him that I would send him some very good bulletins that both the Canadian and American Departments of Agriculture had prepared and that would assist him in his endeavours.

As events turned out later, it became absolutely impossible for me to visit him in Swat and it was with a heavy heart that I had to write and tell him so. I

counted on our meeting again and I know he did, too. But I am keeping up my correspondence with Mahmud and some day, I hope within two years, I'm going back and then I will spend many days with him, if the Lord is willing.

We took a taxi at the Rawalpindi station and had the "cabby" drive us to the Oberoi Flashmans Hotel but not before we made an appointment with Mahmud to meet him at his father's herbal medicine shop and home. He gave us careful directions on how to get there. He said he would take us to the Air Transport Ministry whose offices were only around the corner and one street north of his father's residence and place of business.

'Twas Thursday, July 9 and we had left Karachi at 10.30, July 5. It had taken us the better part of 4 days and 4 nights to reach our destination, which under normal conditions, even by rail, should not have taken more than about 36 hours.

We checked in at the hotel and took only sufficient time to bathe, shave and change clothes. Then, without waiting for breakfast, we made our way out of the courtyard towards the gate for we were headed for Mahmud's father's shop and then the office of the Air Transport Ministry. We didn't know what lay in store for us there but we seemed to feel that there was an air of urgency about it.

Our accommodations at this hotel were quite pleasing, although again the bath facilities left quite a bit to be desired. The beds were not quite as good as those found in most good hotels. In fact, they weren't any better than charpoys. But the rooms were spacious, we had a large sitting room and bedroom and the bathroom was separate from the toilet and wash basin. In all hotels in Pakistan, as far as I could find out, and

in India, too, overhead fans were part of the standard equipment.

The best feature of the hotel was the grounds. The offices, dining room, beverage room and such were located in the center. There was a courtyard between these and the guest rooms, which formed a square around the outside. There was a splendid selection of handsome trees, shrubs and other flowering plants in this courtyard. The atmosphere was delightful and pleasing. It actually was built on the style of our modern motels.

CHAPTER 14

How to Get to Gilgit!

HARDLY HAD WE PUT our feet outside the huge portals of the Oberoi Flashmans Hotel when tonga drivers hailed, followed and harassed us, urging us to avail ourselves of their services. We practically had to beat them off to get them out of our hair—they just couldn't comprehend that two white men would deign to use their legs. As this appeared to be the general pattern wherever we went, I assume that walking is a lost art among Americans or Westerners.

We proceeded down a tree-lined avenue with a boulevard in the middle. It was as attractive a street or avenue as one would find anywhere. But as we made the right turn and headed east, the street scene changed quite drastically for we were now in a busy business section. The name of this street was Rajah Bazar Road.

We had no time to waste but headed as our instructions, given by Mahmud Butt, indicated. We could see

the smaller streets or lanes running off the main artery and these were crowded with small typically Eastern shops and places of business, similar to those in the small bazaar in Karachi.

We marched up the main business street of Rawalpindi at a smart, fast pace and I was finding things mighty interesting. I judged Pindi to be a sort of railway town and important air line center. It was the terminus of the rail line. That's as far north as the train went. The air lines took over from there.

From Lahore to Rawalpindi is 190 miles by rail. But we had made a 90 mile detour at Khanewal in order to get around the bridges and rail lines that were washed out. From Pindi it was 90 miles to Peshawar which is the gateway to the Khyber Pass and Afghanistan. Fanning east and northeast from Rawalpindi were the Hindu Kush mountain system, north and northwest ran the Himalayan system and due north beyond the Himalayas ran the Karakorums. It was to the heart of these black, hard, rocky Karakorums that we were heading. These three mountain systems that practically converge near Gilgit contain most of the world's tallest peaks.

It was possible to get to Gilgit, which was where we were heading, other than by plane but, whereas it was an hour and approximately 10 minutes by plane from Pindi to Gilgit, it would take anywhere from 3 weeks to 3 months to get there by a combination of jeep, horse and foot—and you would have to cross over the Babusar Pass which is about 13,500 feet high. The actual road distance from Rawalpindi to Gilgit is 322 miles and considering the terrain you would have to go through, I guess if you made it in less than 20 days on foot, you'd be doing splendidly.

We continued moving along the street rapidly, made

the left turn as Mahmud told us, where a broad street intersected the road on which we were traveling, and soon we came to what appeared to be the bank and bed of a large river. In the middle trickled a stream, the Lieh Nullah, which flows through Rawalpindi.

The word "nullah" has bothered me no end. It is an Urdu word meaning stream. The natives referred to the Indus, Gilgit and Hunza as rivers but most of all other smaller streams or rivers were referred to as nullahs. The counterpart in our case would be to call the Mississippi and the St. Lawrence, rivers and their smaller tributaries, streams.

Workmen were busy constructing a new bridge . . . 'Twould be a long one . . . to replace the one that had been washed away by the floods just a few months ago. It was hard to believe that this meandering flow of water could rise to steel bridge-destroying proportions when the melting snows and ice rush down from the nearby mountains. An escarpment of planks, over which we and others tightroped our weaving way across, was drawn across the abutments of the old bridge.

I saw for the first time, on the walls of a brick building on the other side of the nullah, the round patches of cow dung plastered in sort of cakes all over the wall. This is the dung from the water buffaloes and it is treated in this manner for drying and then sold as fuel. I had heard of this procedure but this was the first time I had seen it with my own eyes.

It is my conviction that this is one of the reasons why the East does not have sufficient food. Instead of putting back into the soil that which came from the soil, they use it for fuel. On the other hand, who can blame the poor people who, during the winter, have no other means of obtaining heat? Cow dung is a fairly

good substitute for wood or coal, as it burns slowly and gives a good heat. Also, being a local product and not being mined, there would be no transportation or other incidental costs.

Before going on to the air transport building, we called on our friend, Mahmud Butt, as arranged earlier, and we had no trouble locating the establishment from the directions he gave us.

We had a few minutes' wait while Mahmud was getting ready. He called to us from the third story balcony and told us to make ourselves comfortable, which we did. I spent a pleasant few moments walking around the herb doctor's office and examined some of his philters, potions, herbs and other drugs.

Soon Mahmud appeared—handsome, pleasant, youthful, freshly shaven and clean as newly fallen snow —and off we went around the corner to the air transport officer's establishment. Our friend knew whom to ask for and 'twas but a moment until we were ushered into his *sanctum sanctorum.*

When we arrived at his quarters he was busily engaged giving instructions to a host of his men and I watched open-eyed at the efficient, clear-cut and direct manner in which he laid down the orders. Then he focused his attention upon us and we were introduced and asked to be seated. His name was Naseem and he appeared to be a man in his early 30's—clean-cut, frank and alert.

I got right down to business and told him that I wanted to arrange passage to Gilgit. He said that one couldn't get passage to Gilgit unless he had a permit. I told him that we didn't have a permit but that one was forthcoming and should be in his hands by now.

He looked at me and sort of smiled in a peculiar way and shook his head: "I can't supply you with passage

to Gilgit unless you have a permit in your hands and place it in my possession."

I countered, "But in Karachi they told me that when I arrived here the permit would be in your hands."

"I'm sorry," he said, "but I do not have the permit!"

Immediately, within myself I said, "Serves you right. You should never have left that Latif without a permit in your hand. Why did you do it, you fool?"

I was thinking, I was pondering and I'm sure that every faculty at my disposal was working at a tremendous clip.

"But," I reiterated, "they told me positively in Karachi that the permit would be here when I arrived."

"I regret to inform you," he said, "that the only place that a permit comes from is from the office of Kashmir Affairs and that is here in Rawalpindi, not in Karachi. Perhaps you'd better go there and make inquiries."

"Can't you phone them from here?" I asked, seeing a phone on his desk.

"'Twould be of no use!" he said, shaking his head.

I could see quite clearly that he thought our story was a fable and probably he believed that either we were trying to hoodwink him or somebody had hoodwinked us. This made my dreams of entering Hunza suddenly seem a million miles away again!

"Would you please call them anyway?" I asked, in a very serious and emphatic voice.

"It's no use," he said.

Then Friend Butt interjected, "I'm sure, if Mr. Tobe thinks it's worthwhile calling the Kashmir Office, that he has good reason to believe that the permit is there."

Naseem looked at Butt and I could almost hear him saying, "So you've fallen for that story, too, have you?"

"All right then," he said after a few moments hesita-

tion and with an air of futility, "I'll call!"

In a moment he was talking to the Kashmir Office and in another moment he had the Secretary and asked, "Do you know anything about a permit to enter Hunza for a couple of men by the names of John Tobe and Cecil Brunton?"

I saw his eyebrows rise and his mouth partially open and then he was silent for a moment while the party on the other end of the telephone was doing the talking. After a wait of about 5 or 6 minutes, during which time Naseem was doing all the listening (inwardly I was in a terrific state of excitement and I was trying to guess what was happening) he hung up the receiver and turned to me and said, "They have issued the permit for you to go to Hunza. He went on to say that my official permit for issuing the plane ticket was on its way up by messenger at this moment. He said you were to go down to the Kashmir Office and pick up your copy."

"The fare," he went on, "is 134 rupees for both of you—one way."

"But we want return tickets," I said.

"We do not sell return tickets," he stated in a more or less poignant manner.

It was my turn to be surprised. "You will get your return ticket when you are ready to leave Gilgit. It costs much less from Gilgit to Rawalpindi than from Rawalpindi to Gilgit" . . . which was also surprising and unusual!

"But I don't have 134 rupees on me. We didn't go to the bank as yet because the banks weren't open."

"That's all right," broke in Mahmud Butt. "I'll pay for the tickets."

And with that, he pulled a wad of rupee notes out of his shirt pocket.

I was astounded. "Why, you hardly know us!"

"I'm not a bit worried," he replied.

So I accepted a loan of 250 rupees for the time being from Mahmud and gave 134 of them to Mr. Naseem who wrote out receipts and handed them to us.

By this time Naseem was quite affable and in a pleasant mood. So I thought it was a good time for me to ask some rather important questions that I actually had been waiting to ask for a long time.

"How many flights do you make a day?"

"We have five planes and each one makes 3 return flights daily. Of the five planes only one carries passengers and it has but 8 seats, the rest is cargo."

It is by means of this air lift that the Gilgit area is supplied with necessities. I recall now that as I walked into the building there were piles of all types of equipment that an army would require.

"I guess you must be behind in your deliveries then," I countered, "because as I came in, I noticed the huge piles of equipment waiting to be transported."

"The last flight that left Pindi for Gilgit was on July 2 and on the way back the plane could not find its way out of the clouds in the mountains and wound up in Lahore. That was 9 days ago! The weather has been unfit for flying and no flight has gone up since. We do not take off for Gilgit unless the weather is clear."

"I have been told," I said to him, "that this flight is the most dangerous regularly scheduled air flight in the world. Is that true?"

"That is what others say," he said with a smile. "Who am I to disagree with them?"

"But what do you think?" I pressed.

"I would agree," he replied.

"Do you have any or many crack-ups?" I then threw at him.

That question was answered by, "Will you have some tea?"

"Yes, we'd be happy to have a cup of tea with you!"

He immediately directed that tea be brought in and while we were sipping tea, I said to Naseem, "You told me that you never issue a ticket for passage on the plane unless you have the permit in your hand?"

"That is true," replied Naseem. "I'm making an exception in this case for the simple reason that I couldn't do much else. The Kashmir Office told me that the copy of the permit was on its way over to me and I couldn't very well doubt their word, could I?"

"Incidentally," he went on, "the Kashmir Office also told me that you had called them to inquire if the permit had arrived. Then you knew right along that the permit was there at the Kashmir Office!"

"But," I replied, "I did not call the Kashmir Office nor did I know for sure that the permit was there. I took the word of Lieutenant Colonel Latif at Karachi that the permit would be at Rawalpindi."

"Then you did not call the Kashmir Office?"

"Positively not, Mr. Naseem."

"That's strange!"

"It's more than strange—it's mystifying," I replied.

Cecil, Mahmud and myself discussed that phone call after we left the presence of Mr. Naseem and we were all mystified as to whom it might have been who made that phone call and why. And to date, this mystery has never been cleared up.

Who made the phone call and inquired if our permit had been received by the Kashmir Office?

CHAPTER 15

Sojourn in Rawalpindi

WHEN WE LEFT Mr. Naseem's office, it was with the clear understanding that they would phone us at our hotel or leave a message as soon as they were sure the flight was to take off and they would give us about an hour and a half's notice. Of course we could look up at the sky and know beforehand whether or not there was any chance of a flight because we were distinctly told that they would not take off on a cloudy day.

Mr. Naseem also intimated quite clearly that there would be no chance of a flight this day but that we might expect a phone call about 3.30 in the morning as the flights take off at 5. So we immediately contacted our hotel to make sure that there would be someone there to look after our needs if such a phone call came through and we were assured that all would be in order.

We invited Mahmud to have lunch . . . or a late

breakfast . . . with us at the hotel and then we hailed a passing tonga—or a tonga that was on our heels.

I didn't like the idea of riding in tongas because the ponies looked in terribly poor condition. You hardly ever find one without sores on its body. In all my travels throughout Pakistan and India I did not see one tonga pony that had enough fat on it to keep its ribs from being counted one by one.

Upon mentioning this fact to Mahmud, he enlightened me by stating that most of the tongas were controlled by one man in the community and that he hired the drivers and the drivers, not owning the ponies, cared little or nothing about their health and welfare and therefore these poor beasts were subjected to great abuse.

After a rather pleasant breakfast in the spacious dining room of the Oberoi Flashmans Hotel, Mahmud told us that he had to leave for his home in Swat and again he reminded us of our promise that we would visit him there.

"You have to get a permit to enter there also. But it is a mere formality," he said. "You just write to the Department at Markand and the permit will be forthcoming. If you will do it today, then it will be here waiting for you at the hotel when you arrive back from Hunza."

He was most keenly interested in our intended trip to Hunza. He then told me he had wanted to go to Hunza for many years, but somehow it had eluded him. Then about a year ago his closest friend, Aurangzeb, who was the son of the ruler of Swat and who was married to the Premier's daughter, had gone to Hunza on an official visit. Mahmud had intended to go along, too, but at the last minute circumstances intervened that made it impossible for him to make the journey.

So he wanted us to be sure to visit him in order that we could tell him about our experiences and all about Hunza. He also asked me specifically to mention his name to the Mir. (I did this and Mahmud has since written to me, telling of having received a letter from the Mir.)

We said goodbye to Mahmud and I was genuinely sorry to see him go. We had been almost constantly in each other's company since we got on the train at Lahore on Tuesday and, while he was only a young man in his early twenties, I'd gather he had the wisdom and understanding of a man twice that age. He could not have been kinder or more generous if we were his own flesh and blood. He actually looked after every need or want that we encountered, even to providing us with money. He offered to give me any amount I needed and his friendliness and generosity actually overwhelmed us. In truth, I hadn't found such generosity anywhere before in my life.

We spent the entire day walking around Rawalpindi. We took in the main street first and then the bazaars and the side streets. The small shops in the bazaars were a never-ending source of surprise, pleasure, delight and amazement to us.

I got up enough courage to purchase some fruits at the stall and took some back to the hotel with me in a paper bag and then washed them and ate them. Friend Cecil, more or less reluctantly, took a nibble now and then.

Wherever we happened to stroll we were accosted by people who were trying to sell us something or begging. The most unusual one caused me to hold my breath for a moment. A creature that very much resembled and acted like a dog ambled up to me and begged for a coin. I was very happy to part with a few

coins because it gave me a most uncomfortable feeling to have him hanging around. It was the closest to a dog that I had ever known a human being to reach. The legs, the torso, the hands, in fact the entire body was contorted in the most unusual fashion and he propelled himself on all fours, just like any other four-legged animal. The beggars of India and Pakistan are not a pleasant sight, heaven help them!

That night when we got back to the hotel, we immediately checked at the desk but no call had come in for us. The sky seemed to be clearing and I said to Cec, "We'll probably get a call about 3.30 in the morning as Naseem estimated."

At 5 A.M. I could no longer sleep (as it was, I had been sleeping with one eye open) so I got up and walked about the courtyard of the hotel which was quite spacious and planted with many attractive trees, shrubs and flowers. I checked at the desk but no message had come.

'Twas a little after eight when we sat down to breakfast in the dining room. I liked this hotel and was enjoying my stay there very much, although I would rather have been on my way to Gilgit.

We had arrived in Pindi on the 9th at daybreak and our first meal at the hotel was a brunch with Mahmud. Unlike American hotels, their charge is based on room and meals and, as there is not much sense paying for meals and not taking them, you will understand why we were on deck at mealtimes. Besides, eating places are not easily come by out here.

This was the 10th of July, Friday, and by now we were getting quite used to the atmosphere and surroundings. We saw the same people at every meal—at least, so I think—and we got so that we nodded to this one and that one as we entered and left.

Invariably, at these hotels and at practically every other place you stay or eat in Pakistan and India, the fare is strictly British.

At the Oberoi Flashmans I was intrigued by the head waiter or maitre d'hotel or whatever you might call him. I don't know why this man fascinated me, but for some strange reason he did.

I watched him as he handled the boys and men (waiters) under him. I observed as he prepared the condiments, jams, jellies, rolls and things that it was his duty to get ready for the tables, although the main courses all came from the kitchen. He maintained mastery over all he surveyed from his eerie square alcove with a counter around it. From here, he dispensed the cutlery and other requisites of comparatively luxurious dining. He struck me as a cross between Simon Legree, Uriah Heep, Rasputin and Dracula. I could hear him saying under his breath, with every bite of food you took, "Drop dead—choke to death—apoplexy—a stroke—but don't dirty our tablecloth."

I can just see him in my mind's eye after every meal gathering together the bits of so called butter (ghee) and moulding them bit by bit into whole pats again, gathering up the bits of jellies left on the plates and putting them back neatly into the jars, pouring into the pitcher the milk that was left in each silver service, whether it made all of the contents sour or not. If sour, so much the better. Then you wouldn't use so much! Ah, the bits of broken toast left over from breakfast baffle him. But not for long for he puts them into a bowl and handing it to the cooks says, "Bread pudding for dinner!"

He plans the menus meticulously so that there will be the least variety possible. Anything that smacks of breadth would kill him, so every day you have your

choice of porridge or corn flakes, eggs (any style, but eggs), toast (light dark or dark or light), then coffee (Ugh!) or tea and jam (amber or black) . . . what it is or what it is made of only he knows and he won't tell you for fear his supply of sewage will be cut off.

But he does offer variety to break the monotony. Where do we get the broadest selection? You'd never guess. In cutlery! He must have kinfolk in the flatware business, although you wouldn't believe he could have kinfolk. I believe he was a foundling and was left on a stone doorstep. That doorstep has never been crossed since, and never will, for it has never forgiven itself for affording him a resting place.

Even with water he is miserly. You have to signal for each glassful. He doesn't dare trust anyone with the silver pitcher that he keeps clutched to his sunken, beastly bosom.

Lest you assume from my writing—the result of a series of mental pictures—that this old, sour, frozen picklepuss is not a nice guy, let me assure you that this is furthest from the truth. He's a lousy, stinking, miserable, old son of a sea cook's she dog . . . that's our headwaiter!

"We think the food's crummy," I said to Cec as I roused myself from my horrendous dining table reverie, "but here goes a guy taking a box full of it home to enjoy its mouth-watering, succulent goodness in the privacy of his luxuriant home, midst swirling, cooling fans."

"Yes," said Cec, "he's probably taking the lousy garbage home in a box because there is no other way to carry it and it's for the cat or dog, poor thing!"

After breakfast I suggested to Cec, "Let's go out the back door. I noticed a Pakistan Air Lines sign over one of the outer apartments when we came in yesterday.

I'd like to drop in and make some inquiries."

A pleasant young miss asked if she could serve me. I told her about my passage to Gilgit and she said that it had nothing to do with this department but she would call the office of Mr. Naseem for me. In a minute she connected me, and Naseem was on the other end.

"This is Tobe speaking," I said. "Remember me?"

"What are you doing here?" he asked in a surprised tone. "I thought you were in Gilgit!"

"Why, no. I'm waiting here for a call!"

"Well, you were scheduled to go out this morning. Just a moment and I'll check."

Then a moment later he said, "I'm sorry but something went wrong here. The clerk claimed he didn't know which hotel you were staying in and therefore was unable to contact you. A plane leaves in an hour for Gilgit. Can you be ready right away?"

"We sure can!" I said excitedly.

"Then come right down to my office and I'll send a car to take you out to the airport."

Believe me, it didn't take us very long to check out of the hotel and in less than half an hour we were parked at Mr. Naseem's quarters—bag and baggage!

CHAPTER 16

Over and Between the Himalayas

THE AIR TRANSPORT OFFICE was a busy, bustling place and Naseem was a very busy man. But he took time off, when he saw us arrive, to tell us how sorry he was that his man got our address confused and caused us to miss the first flight.

While watching him perform in his office, I was impressed with the fact that he was a busy, efficient individual. And let me assure you that efficiency in the East is something that is worth noting because it is seldom seen—at least, that has been my experience.

To me, Naseem ranks as one of the few genuinely intelligent and efficient executives that I met and found in my travels in India, Pakistan and Afghanistan and he should rise to the top of his field. There were employees buzzing back and forth continually. He was busy initialing papers, glancing over other documents, giving orders, calling in this man, sending out that one.

So at the first opportunity I begged off and told him that we would wait outside.

When we got outside our baggage was already placed in a nice new Volkswagen. The driver was ready and we at once drove to the Pindi Airport. We waited about for the announcement about our flight and the driver with our bags in the Volkswagen waited in the background.

I watched as the plane that we were to take was being loaded and I did not see our luggage go on. I mentioned this to Cec and he said he'd go back and check with the driver. He returned in a minute and told me that the driver said he would see that the luggage was put on at the right time and for us not to worry about it.

Within a couple of minutes we were given the signal that our plane was ready and off we went. The planes that are used to fly from Pindi to Gilgit are all Dakotas and they are manned by very capable pilots and crews. They are in good condition but remember, they are used chiefly for carrying cargo. Only one plane regularly carries 8 passengers, but occasionally a space is made for a passenger or 2 on the freight runs. There were the full 8 passengers on this trip—Cec and I and 6 soldiers.

At the take-off the plane heads right for the mountains. In fact, there is nothing else north of Pindi.

I have never been particularly fond of flying but business and the time element have compelled me to fly on many occasions, including a flight back and forth across the Dominion of Canada. But I still never particularly liked flying. Therefore, flying the most dangerous course in the world didn't make me happy.

Once the plane took off for Gilgit it was, by all standards, strictly a straight through ticket . . . you had

to go through or else! There was no mind changing because of or under any circumstances. It was do or die! The Dakotas cannot fly above 17,000 feet. The cleft between the mountains through which we were flying was not wide enough for a transport plane to make a turn and, as there were many peaks from 17,000 to 26,000 feet in this area, a turn above the mountains was out of the question. It is indeed a pity that they haven't found a way to make a plane back up.

Now you can understand, but definitely, why they never took off from Pindi unless the sky was clear. If the clouds closed in and the pilot couldn't see or find Gilgit, it was the point of no return, for beyond Gilgit is a continuous mountain wall that has never yet been pierced! Therefore, a pilot on this route can't afford many mistakes, for one little error of being a bit off course might mean that he's had it—boom!

The soldiers didn't seem to mind the flight or the mountains and Friend Cec seemed to be enjoying it. While I didn't show any outward fear, believe me, I was most uncomfortable. As the pilot guided his plane —weaving here, banking there and such—I felt that at any moment the wings would nick the mountainsides.

In the distance and on both sides could be seen snow-capped peaks of the really lofty mountains like Nanga Parbat—26,660 feet; Haramosh—24,270; Rakaposhi —25,550; and some others over 20,000 feet but still unnamed. The area is just pock-marked—or had I better say studded—with these eminent peaks.

We were flying at an altitude of 16,000 feet. There were good sized mountains beneath us, which we seemed to scrape, and much taller ones on both sides. Below I could see patches of green dotting the mountainsides and valleys. Many I could recognize as villages or settlements. Some had but one abode but prac-

tically all of them showed signs of human habitation. Signs of cultivation could be discerned, especially when we flew over those at the higher elevations.

From what I have seen of this vast mountain system, broad valleys, green grass and trees are a rarity. These mountains are totally unlike our Rockies, which are covered with grassy slopes and trees of various kinds. These terrifying elevations just look hard, rough, tough and foreboding. Yet these tiny villages popped up here, there and everywhere. They were so isolated that it was almost frightening. They were so far removed from civilization that they had to be almost completely self-sustaining. They could count on little or absolutely nothing from the outside world. Yet there are hundreds, if not thousands, of these small settlements throughout the Hindu Kush, the Karakorums and the Himalayas.

I wondered why men would seek out places like this and here live or eke out an existence from the bit of earth that forms in the tiny valleys. All about them is continual danger from heavy rains, melting snows and ice, landslides, falling rocks and whatnot. Yet men choose an existence in such places. It could only be for one reason—their love of freedom.

Actually there is doubt in my mind as to whether or not all of these places are included in the census figures. To my imagination and from what I have actually seen and witnessed, I don't believe it is possible that all of these tiny remote, isolated hamlets are recorded. I'm quite sure there are many of them that are not known to exist to the outside world.

If it is a Shangri-la that a man is seeking, each, or any, of these little outposts could be that place. If you can stand the privation—the lack of modern conveniences of conventional civilization and its comforts

—then this could be your paradise!

I thought of these things as the plane skimmed the lower mountain tops but I was brought back to stark reality when the plane banked rather sharply and I had to hold on to my seat.

If it is an aerial view of mountains that you want, then take that hop from Rawalpindi to Gilgit. It is undoubtedly the most beautiful, the most awe-inspiring and to me, the most frightening mountain flight in all creation. There just couldn't be anything better or worse, depending on how you look at it!

I heard the soldiers mention Murree and the Murree Mountains and that name meant something to me, for that was where we would have headed if the permit had been unobtainable from Lieutenant Colonel Latif. It was the summer home of President Ayub Kahn. It was not far below us because it sits at an altitude of 8,000 feet and at that moment we were flying at 16,000. We could make out the forms of the houses.

We passed a mountain known as Malka Parbat whose height is something over 17,000 feet. Then comes the world famed Babusar Pass which is actually the gateway to the Himalayas. It is at 13,800 feet. This pass is usually open for only two or three months a year for travel by animal, jeep or foot. As far as I can ascertain there is no other means or method of crossing into the Kashmir section of Pakistan and India except over Babusar, so you can perhaps understand what a tight wall of mountains that area really is.

Nanga Parbat dominates the area so completely that when flying on a clear day or when it is not covered by low-hanging clouds, you can view it both before and after you have reached Babusar.

Close to the Babusar Pass are found two of the most beautiful lakes in the entire mountain region. They are

known as Lalusar and Saif-ul-Maluk.

Next followed the two towns of Abbottabad and Muzaffarabad in rapid succession.

Then excitement rose and I heard the other passengers chatting away. I caught the words "Nanga Parbat" and they all craned and wiggled to see the sight. When I saw it for the first time I was too awed to say anything. I just sat and absorbed all of her beauty and I knew that we would yet be flying much closer to her snow-covered breast.

It is believed that on the snow-packed shoulders and bosom of Nanga Parbat alone are supported more glaciers than on any other peak in the world. She is the true mother of glaciers. It is known that these glaciers in turn have taken the lives of more brave men than any or all other glaciers and ice fields. 'Tis in these ice fields that her would-be conquerors often forfeit their lives.

Even from this distance, which, from information relayed to me by the pilot, was between 15 and 20 miles, she was one of the noblest spectacles of natural beauty that human eyes are ever privileged to view. Her beauty prevails and reigns over the entire region, leaving no doubt as to her majestic supremacy. She lies resplendent in her glistening white robes and clouds float above and about her like broad, fluttering, gossamer ribbons.

Only a few mountain peaks in all the world are taller . . . Everest, Godwin-Austen, Kanchenjunga, Lhotse One, Makalu, Lhotse Two, Cho Oyu, Dhaulagiri. None are her equal in natural mountain splendor. She is the most scenic surface of eminence in all the world!

Now I saw a narrow ribbon below and I had my maiden view of the majestic Indus. It wound and snaked through the wide gorges. I tried to follow its course northward to see if I could locate the junction

where it was joined by the Gilgit but soon it was hidden by interloping mountains.

But what was the use of pointing out this or that or the other? Every view, every scene was extraordinary! Nowhere else in the world will you see anything that even remotely resembles it. One of the things that thrilled me very much was the thought that here as I was flying over these mountains, I saw rivers in the making . . . yes, mighty rivers, like the Indus. These mountain freshets, nullahs of whatever you might call them were the embryo of the mighty Indus. You could see one start as a wee ribbon or a trickle and where it met a few more of these ribbons and trickles, it suddenly became a cascading, hurtling, raging torrent, that wound up in a fast flowing river on its way to contribute its waters to the great Indus.

There are two routes that can be taken by the pilots when flying from Pindi to Gilgit. The first is actually measured at 210 miles. Whenever possible this route is taken. It is considered to be the most direct route, but one which the planes are not always able to negotiate, due to reasons concerning atmospheric pressure and other conditions known only to airport officials and pilots. At all other times the plane follows the contours of the deviating valleys of mountains and this distance is clocked at 275 miles.

I would vouchsafe that this is 200 to 300 miles of the most vivid, enchanting, bleak, harsh, unusual, lovely mountain scenery in all creation. And its immensity and splendor makes man, his world and his petty contrivances fade into insignificance.

The "Fasten Safety Belt" light flashed on and I knew we were soon to land at Gilgit and I was happy that we were reaching the end of the phase of the journey that I had worried about the most!

CHAPTER 17

Finest — East or West!

THE AREA AROUND GILGIT is, without doubt or misgivings, recognized to be the most mountainous region in all the world.

As the plane circled to get set for the landing at Gilgit, I saw before me what appeared to be the shallow bowl of a huge crater, scalloped on all sides by towering mountains. This was the Gilgit airfield, vital link in the affairs of Pakistan and Kashmir. The field was big enough to accommodate the largest of airplanes but I doubt if it could handle a jet.

The snow-capped mountains on practically all sides did make a most unusual setting for an air base and it reminded me somewhat of a snug little harbor where a ship could take refuge in a storm, except that it wasn't water, but a nest in the mountains.

The plane landed, we got out and made our way to the airport office, an attractive group of buildings

with flower beds in bloom, neatly planted in scalloped pattern at the entrance.

When anyone reaches Gilgit, it is no secret to the airport officials and the P.A., for undoubtedly they have scrutinized the limited passenger list. As I told you earlier, this is considered by the Pakistan Department of Defense to be one of the most strategic military zones in the country. Therefore, whoever goes to Gilgit has been screened before he ever takes off from Pindi.

It is an arsenal and the Pakistanis intend taking no risks. It is part of old Kashmir which the Pakistanis seized, are holding and intend to hold. When you take into consideration the proximity to unfriendly or doubtful states like Afghanistan, China, Russia and India which surround it, then you realize that the reason for these precautions is based on a firm foundation.

Pakistan claims all of Kashmir because of its Mohammedan population but India still holds and controls most of it!

I do not intend to give or air my views concerning the politics or the reasons or the rhymes concerning these political maneuvers. But, if India and Pakistan were divided along the lines of religion, then most certainly Kashmir should go to Pakistan because I have read figures, even in India, that more than 90 per cent of the Kashmiris are Mohammedan.

We were in doubt as to the exact procedure to follow once we reached Gilgit. But from information that I had received and things that I had read, I felt the proper thing to do was phone the P.A.'s office and notify him personally of our arrival.

P.A. stands for Political Agent. It is a carry-over from the British use of the term and the P.A. was usually an army man—a major or a colonel—and was a representative of the British Government for that

area, having command and control of the entire military unit.

That status evidently remains the same under home rule. The P.A. is the military commander of the area and a wide area it is. The job as I saw it required a man who could administer efficiently and capably. He had to know the people and command respect. It was his duty to supervise, investigate and make trips into all of the settlements in the area—or villages, you might call them.

I had one of the airport employees, who were friendly and cooperative, phone the P.A.'s residence. The P.A. was not in his office when the call was put through, but a message came back stating that a jeep was on its way down to pick us up. So we made ourselves as comfortable as possible and waited.

It was 15 minutes before the jeep turned up and then we went out to get our luggage. Here we ran into a cold snag . . . there was no luggage! It had not been put on the plane and therefore it couldn't come off!

The airport officials assured us it would turn up on the next plane that came. I cussed myself for not personally supervising the luggage going on the plane. Even on our trip from Toronto to Montreal and from Montreal to Paris and from Paris to Rome, I actually saw our luggage moving on and off our plane. In fact, whenever I could maintain sight of our belongings I watched them. Here was the first time I'd slipped and I blamed myself and no one else. I resolved that this would never happen again. If it meant that I had to supervise my luggage on and off, I would do so because the loss of the bags would mean delay and inconvenience. It was certainly not a matter of life and death but delays and inconveniences can be very costly and troublesome on a trip of this nature where time is the essence.

As the matter stood we had been 8 days getting from Karachi to Gilgit. If all had been in order—no waiting for the permit and such—it should have taken at the most only two days. Now we were faced with at least another day's holdup.

Glum and disappointed, having only a well-loaded briefcase, cameras and such, we got into the jeep. The driver took us along a narrow winding road where in many places one had to use extreme skill and care lest the vehicle roll off or slip off. The turn to the rest house was a genuine hairpin. The jeep could not make it in one shot. He had to go down and back up and go down again and back up again before he could get straightened away on the road down to the rest house. When the driver pulled up to the little compound in front of the building, we were pleasantly surprised to see how clean and neat it looked. Less than 50 feet away the Gilgit River with its murky grey waters flowed swiftly towards the mighty Indus.

The soldier who drove the jeep helped us unload and carried our little bit of luggage to the veranda of the house. Then the chowkidor turned up and in a few minutes we were comfortably ensconced in our room. Emergency change of outer clothing, razor and other vital needs were carried in my briefcase and in Cec's shoulder bag.

Down to the river we went for a wash and a spruce up. Then we stretched out on the charpoys for a bit of relaxation.

We had barely got nicely settled when we heard the sound of a motor vehicle coming into the yard again. We looked out and there was the same jeep that had brought us, manned by the same driver. He did not speak fluent English but he spoke enough to inform us that a mistake had been made. The P.A. was away

when we arrived and the usual procedure was to take visitors who had no specific place in mind to the rest house. But now that the P.A. was there and he knew who we were and was expecting us, he wanted us to come and stay with him as his guests, as this had been his intention from the beginning. This we did not expect but if the fates sought to be kind, why should we object? In fact, we cooperated!

We were driven now through the streets of the village, the bazaars and the military grounds. When we reached the driveway to the P.A.'s residence, we found it was flanked on the left by a garrison post and there were armed soldiers standing guard outside on the porch. Our driver was waved through and the jeep pulled up to the large brick home surrounded by a very beautiful garden and attractive, well-kept grounds.

The P.A. was there to greet us . . . a handsome military figure, fresh and neatly dressed in Western style, with a most intelligent face. He turned out to be one of the finest men I have ever met and one of the most intelligent and capable, too. His English was flawless. I liked him from the moment I set eyes on him and felt as though I could trust him with my fortune and my life.

Throughout our stay at Gilgit he was the finest host that any human being could be. Our every whim was catered to. Everything we could possibly use or need was thoughtfully arranged for. During our complete stay, both going in and coming out of Hunza, approximately 6 days, we had every meal at his table, with the exception of one when we made a sojourn into another locality and even then, he sent along some tinned food for our lunch.

We were shown to our quarters in the P.A.'s home. It was a large, well built, red brick residence, somewhat castle-like in appearance, with a round belfry-like

facade. I was pleased to see a screen door, which we passed through into our chamber. There were two double beds, clean linen and thick blankets and quilts. Overhead hung what appeared to be a heavy tapestry, affixed to the ceiling on a heavy wooden roller. For a moment I wondered what it was and then when I saw a tasseled cord attached to it and tied to the post of the bed, I realized that it was a type of fan.

The room had two dressers and comfortable chairs and was in every way as comfortable as the average room in America. Then there were two smaller rooms leading off from our large bedroom. The one on the right was evidently a dressing room or sitting room or whatever you might call it. The other led to the bathroom, which consisted of a toilet, sink and bath. They were old-fashioned but in good working order. To find something as useful and as functional as this layout in this part of the world was more than I ever expected.

The bathroom and the dressing room were furnished with a door that enabled you to pass from one to the other without going into the bedroom. The bathroom was rather dark but it had a small electric light bulb, one of the old carbon types that I hadn't seen for many years. It swung from the ceiling.

There was a door at the end of the bathroom which I noticed, while kept shut, was never locked. I learned the reason for this. About 6 o'clock in the morning, when the servant slid carefully in and deposited tea and biscuits on the little table between the two beds without our knowing it, he used this door.

At no time did we ever think of guarding our valuables. We took it for granted that these people were honest and you don't have to have any misgivings on that score, because we found that both in Gilgit and Hunza—and I'm sure the same is true of Nagir, Punial,

Yasin and other parts—they are scrupulously so.

In our bedroom we had a fluorescent light, which was somewhat of an anachronism.

We had barely put away our hand baggage and cameras and taken a wash before a knock came on the door and the servant announced that tea was being served in the garden under the trees.

We were enjoying the luxury of tea and biscuits with the P.A. on the lawn, seated in comfortable chairs, when another jeep drove up, and the P.A. introduced us to the engineer of the district who was investigating the havoc wrought by the recent storm. He said they were going to make a tour of the area and would we like to come along. We jumped at the opportunity.

Another jeep was called into use and we took off. We visited many farms whose owners had lost part of their orchards or part of their land by the sudden flash flood that had come from the mountains. I recall one specific orchard that we visited. I say orchard, but when we were there examining it, it was one large field of boulders and gravel. Yet only a few days ago it had been a fertile orchard. The heat way up in the mountains had caused a quick or more rapid melting of the snow and ice and the water gathered in such force that the nullah deviated from its course and cut a new swath, carrying everything before it. Luckily, there were no homes in its way and I heard of no loss of life. But it left a field of boulders and gravel.

As I walked across the field and stepped from one huge boulder to another, I said to the engineer, "It is absolutely incredible that the water could have brought with it boulders of that size, weighing tons each, and this entire broad bed of gravel. It is unbelievable. I don't think I can ever make anyone believe it, even if I tell them the sincere truth because even I, standing

here on the gravel, cannot credit what I see. It just illustrates the force of a fast-flowing mountain freshet!"

The P.A. and the engineer took us to a new building project that was going on and showed us half a dozen or more buildings similar to the one we were put in when we came to Gilgit—down by the river. They told us that these guest houses were to accommodate future tourists as there was no hotel in Gilgit.

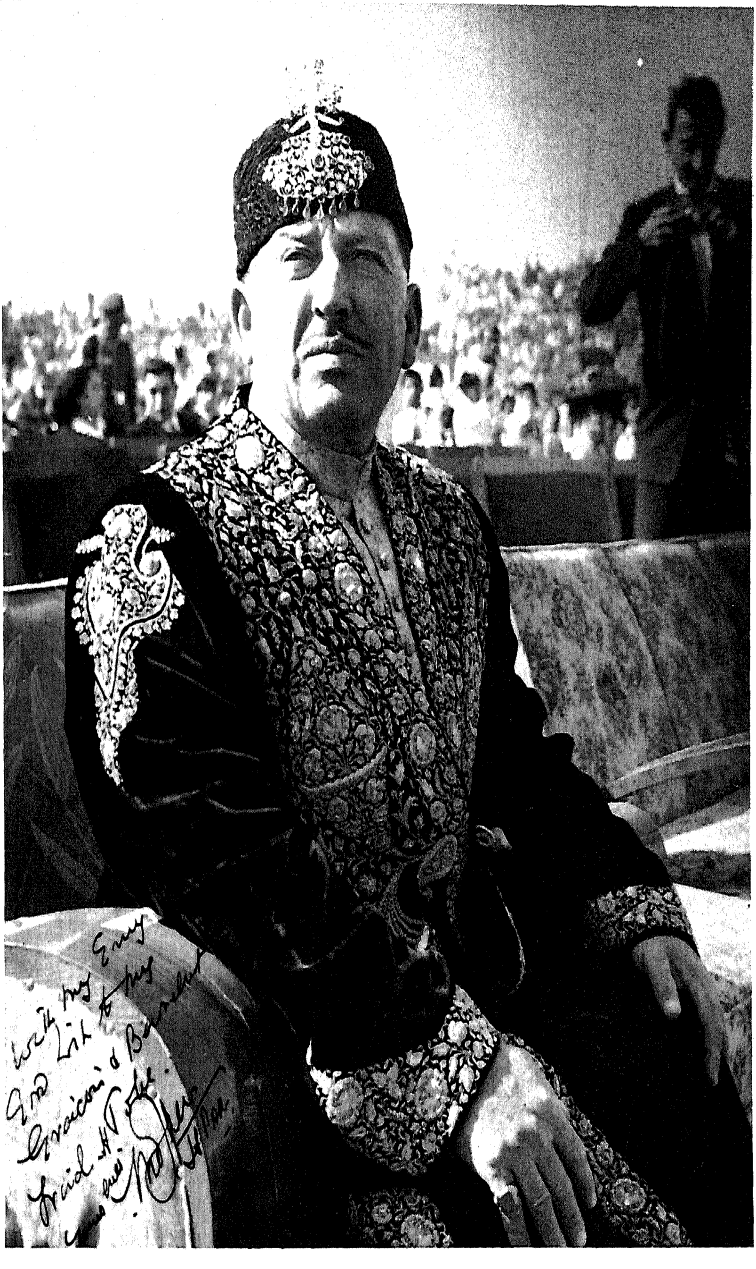
Then we returned to the P.A.'s home. Soft drinks were served in the garden and at 9 o'clock dinner was called and we all paraded into the P.A.'s dining room. There were the engineer, Cec and I, the P.A.'s son, Naeem-ur-Rahman Khan, who was 18 years old, and the P.A. himself. I was honored by having the seat at the right of the P.A. where I sat for all meals during my entire stay with him. Cec was on his left.

The dinner was excellent and included soup, rice, fish (in this instance trout caught by the P.A., who was an ardent angler) curried rice, meat and dessert, stewed fruit. Fresh fruit always sat in the center of the table.

After dinner we went into the sitting room where green tea was served to us while we chatted amiably.

About a quarter to 11 the group broke up to go their bedrooms and with good reason, for barely had we got to our quarters when the Delco lighting system gave us a warning and in a few minutes the lights were out for the night. We learned later that every night at 11 o'clock the lights go off in order to conserve gasoline because every bit has to be brought from Rawalpindi by plane and they feel that it isn't necessary to run the electric system after 11 o'clock.

That was the beginning of the friendship with a man whom I have learned to respect and esteem more than any other man I met in the East. I doubt very much if nobler, finer individuals are created.



The Mir of Hunza in ceremonial dress.

The Mir presiding at his court.

Habib-Ur Rahman Khan, the political agent at Gilgit.

CHAPTER 18

The P. A.'s Garden

HABIB-UR RAHMAN KHAN was the proper full name of our friend, the Political Agent, but everybody referred to him as the P.A. and I find it most expedient to use the same title.

At the first opportunity, I mentioned to the P.A. that by some accident our luggage had not been put on the plane with us and that it must be somewhere in Rawalpindi, but most important, it meant that we could not go on to Hunza until the luggage arrived. He assured me that there was no cause for concern or worry and that the luggage would most likely turn up with the next plane that came into Gilgit.

At 6 o'clock in the morning we were served with tea while in bed and the servant who brought it through the back door came in stealthily, placed it on the night table between the two beds and quietly left. This he did every morning while we were guests of the P.A.

Normally I am not considered an early riser. Now, of course, this depends entirely on what you or he or I would consider early rising. My father, for example, always rose at 5 A.M. and so did my older brother and one of my younger brothers. But then I, in my youth, could have slept night and day. I always think that I would have spent my life in bed if my dear old mother hadn't called and nudged me, and reproved me by saying, "Son, you're sleeping your life away!"

How the years change a man! I would never have believed that I would live to see such a drastic change in myself. I seldom if ever permit myself more than 7 hours of sleep out of the 24. But lest you think I still no longer like to sleep, I want to shatter that thought by telling you I still love it, but I find if I get too much at one time, I get "headachy" and become logy and listless. So in order to keep alert and in good health, I have to get up early.

Normally I get up at a quarter to 7 every morning and my usual hour for retiring is about 1:30. That gives me about 5¼ hours every night but then I snitch a nap immediately after my evening meal, usually from 7 till 8:30. Then I usually go back to the office and continue working until it's time to go to bed again.

Now out here in the mountains there seemed to be no sleep in me once the sun struggled over the peaks. Probably my subconscious mind realized that there were many things to see and even more to do and that they wouldn't be accomplished lying in bed. In the morning, long before 7 o'clock came around, I was outdoors walking casually about the garden. I found it exhilarating, interesting, soul-filling and it was a good garden by any standards. It was large, well-planned and capably maintained.

In the garden were apricot, plum, mulberry, lime,

peach, apple, walnut and cherry trees, each of which bore its share of fruit or even more than its share, with the exception of the peach, which was not doing too well.

The P.A. had many varieties of annual and perennial plants and the garden was quite colorful. There were marigolds, snapdragons, petunia, asters, chrysanthemums, gladiolus, iris and one or two varieties of flowers that I could not identify.

The entire estate area was neat and well-kept, which was entirely to the P.A.'s credit, because nowhere in the East did I see a better kept garden. I expect that he had to personally supervise and direct the operation—otherwise he would never have achieved those results.

As close as I could judge, the entire grounds surrounding the building would encompass at least two acres. To the north of the garden was a massive mountain wall which just seemed about a stone's throw away, although it must have been a mile or two. I was told that it was 14,000 feet high. I expressed disbelief when that figure was quoted because in traveling through the Rockies in Canada and the United States and the Alps in Europe, seldom does one have the privilege of gazing upon a mountain that is 14,000 feet high and this mass looked like a huge black hill. But they assured me that the figure was mathematically correct.

I was joined in my stroll in a few minutes by the P.A. and I soon learned he was, apart from his many other accomplishments and achievements, an ardent gardener. The man's knowledge of the horticultural field amazed me. I soon found that he was one of those rare individuals who could comprehend quickly, anything that was told or explained to him. You know how it is with some people, you have to go into detail to make

them understand what you mean. Well, with this fine fellow all you had to do was mention a thing or mention principles and he understood as though he had a picture or the actual item in front of him. Not many men are gifted in that way.

"That peach tree of yours over near the mulberry is not doing very well. I'm afraid you may lose it!"

"Do you know what's wrong with it?" asked the P.A.

"Not for sure," I replied. "But if my guess is right, it's getting too much water. Your gardener is obviously irrigating the entire area and, of course, giving the trees equal quantities of water. Well, a peach tree just can't stand that much water. If this coming winter is a severe one, you'll probably lose it. On the other hand, if the winter is mild, it may come through. But if you withhold water, it may regain its strength and come back again next summer."

"Well, how will I water the rest of the area without watering the peach tree?"

"That's not as hard as it sounds," I answered. "Build up the soil to an extra 3 or 4 inches around the area of the peach tree—approximately extending to the perimeter of the root. I'd say a 4 or 5 foot circle would do it. Then your peach tree will be safe!"

He thanked me and said he would see to it immediately.

Now he took me carefully through the entire area for about three-quarters of an hour. We discussed Gilgit's future possibilities as an agricultural center.

I was still wandering about the garden, peering into that bush and that tree and this evergreen, when the P.A. mentioned that breakfast was ready. I don't know how he knew but I assume that one of his men had signaled to him from the veranda.

Cec and the P.A.'s son were in the dining room.

The meal was almost identical with that which would be served in England or America, except that there was no bacon—pork being strictly "taboo" to Mohammedans. This morning we had oatmeal, to begin with, and we could have either honey or sugar. The sugar is quite dark in color. It's not nearly as refined as our American sugar and therefore, of course, not as sweet. I used honey. We were offered boiled or scrambled eggs and toast or chapatties. Cec reached for the toast. I tried the chapatties and the P.A. and his son both chose chapatties. Then there was coffee with cream . . . and jam, jelly or marmalade, some homemade and some of English manufacture.

With each and every meal there were at least two or three plates filled with fruit on the table . . . fresh plums, apricots, apples and black mulberries. I've known the succulent goodness of mulberries for many years and have a large tree in my garden. It's been there for almost 30 years and still bears prodigious crops. The berries are small. The flavor is pleasing but somewhat flat. But the mulberries in Hunza were almost as big as your thumb. For deliciousness of taste, flavor and honeyed sweetness, few fruits or berries in the West could match them. I ate all I could lay my hands on and was ashamed to ask for more. They melted in your mouth and, while they had seeds, in the ripe stage of the berry you could not feel or taste them.

Isn't it strange how we become addicted to one specific kind of food? If you were to watch the average Westerner sit down to breakfast every morning before going to business, you would find the daily routine would seldom, if ever, vary . . . juice, either orange or tomato and sometimes pineapple, toast, coffee and, most often, eggs. The eggs may be varied a bit . . . poached, fried or soft or hard boiled. Sometimes you

may have ham or bacon with your eggs. You might get a nibble of cheese with your toast. Then you'd wind up with a bit of marmalade or jam. The only variation that I know of to any degree is the use of cereal . . . oatmeal, cream of wheat or perhaps an uncooked cereal like corn flakes, bran flakes or something similar. I don't think many of you will disagree with me when I say that that, with slight variation, is the breakfast that is accepted and used by 99 people out of 100. Whether or not that is a healthful breakfast is strictly another matter. I am not going into that at this time.

For myself, I like change. Whenever I hear of a new or different food or even a new way to eat or use an old well-known food, I quickly try it or ask my wife to prepare it. I think it is indeed a sad situation when at least 9 out of 10 of us eat the same foods daily without ever thinking that there might be something else that would be as good for us, or even better.

The breakfast that I have just finished describing is the typical breakfast taken in the upper class or the British-trained individual's home. And as you may recognize, it is a typical English breakfast. A somewhat similar pattern is followed in America, where the original British influence was also quite potent.

When I left the P.A.'s dining room and stepped out onto the veranda, I noticed a young man seated on the veranda rail, in the typical fashion, with one foot on the board floor. He nodded pleasantly and said, "Good-day, sir!"

I replied in kind.

"I am waiting to see the Political Agent," he said to me.

Then I told him, "He has just finished his breakfast and I'm sure he will be in his office in a minute or two."

The place where this young lad was sitting was

directly in front of the P.A.'s office. As the P.A.'s office was one of the front rooms in his residence, he usually entered from the dining room, through an adjoining door.

I thought at the time that this was a very young man or boy to be calling on the Political Agent because, invariably when anyone calls on an important man like the Political Agent, the business must be of significance. The boy was neatly and cleanly dressed and had a dark handsome face that I would say was loaded with character. His hair bore a typical military cut and his casual clothing was neat, clean and bore the unmistakable sign of quality.

"Are you American?" he asked.

I shook my head and said, "No, we're Canadians!"

"Are you staying in Gilgit?" was his next question.

"Only as long as we have to," I replied. "Our chief aim is to move to Hunza."

"Why, that's where I intend to go," he cheerfully told me. "That is, if I can get permission!"

"Do you need a permit, too?" I asked, with some surprise.

"Yes!" he went on. "No one is allowed to go into Hunza without specific permission, not even a native Pakistani!"

"That's really news to me!" I said.

'Twas at that time one of the P.A.'s servants came out and told the young lad that the Political Agent would now see him.

"I'll see you when I come out," he said to me as he marched towards the P.A.'s inner sanctum.

Cec was busy in our quarters, trying to make the best of the clothes that he had until our baggage could be located. So I took a stroll around the garden as I felt that I would like to talk to the young lad when he came

out, because now I was very much interested in him as he, too, was going to Hunza and I thought perhaps we could join forces and go together.

He spoke good English, but I noticed a slight foreign musical twang to it which I could not recognize or place. But it was definitely not the accent that is used by native Pakistanis or Indians. I was somewhat puzzled and intrigued, but the fact that the boy's manner, expression and way were so frank and open, attracted me to him.

It was at least half an hour before the young lad came out and he came directly towards me in the garden.

"Yes," he said, "I have the Political Agent's permission to go on to Hunza."

"When are you leaving?" I asked.

"Very early tomorrow morning," he replied.

"Who is going with you?" I asked.

"No one!" he said ."I'm going by myself!"

"Surely, you're not going to take that long trip through the mountains alone!"

"Oh, I've taken more dangerous trips by myself."

I looked him over carefully, but not the slightest indication could I gather that he didn't mean exactly what he said. To myself I thought he was bragging a little bit.

"We're hoping to start early in the morning, too," I told him. "We intend to hire two horses and a donkey and two bearers to come along with us, besides a guide that the Mir of Hunza has instructed to accompany us. Why not join our party?"

"I would like to," he said, "but I'm not absolutely sure of all my arrangements, conditions and circumstances. I am staying at the home of the Scout Commander, my father's friend. Although it is my intention to leave early tomorrow morning, you know how it is

when you're staying with friends!" The Gilgit scouts are an active military unit, originated by the British, but still maintained by the present administration.

"I understand," I replied. "If the fates are kind, I'll see you in Baltit."

CHAPTER 19

Word From Baltit

His Name Was Shah Mirzah and he was by far the most efficient, the most pleasant and congenial household employee that we encountered on our entire journey. His smile was genuine. He seemed to sense our wants and was genuinely friendly without being parasitic or groveling. He did not look like an Asian. Everything about him seemed to be Western or European. Both Cec and I took an instant liking to the man.

I thought he was the cook but later I found that he was the P.A.'s house manager; that is, he looked after all affairs pertaining to the household. He had six men under him and he bossed them with kindness and understanding, but was firm and tolerated no fooling. He understood a little bit of English but couldn't speak enough to make himself understood.

If he saw that a certain food or dish that he had prepared pleased us, he would press it upon us until

all that he had prepared was consumed. Then a meal or two later we would find that he had been thoughtful enough to remember our likes and we had it again. A custard pudding was served at one meal and, as this is one of my prime favorites, I could not disguise my fondness for it. Well, from that day on I was sure to get a nice custard pudding with one of my meals. As it is most nourishing and satisfying, it made a mighty fine supplement to our daily menu and I was grateful to Shah Mirzah for his good sense and cooperation.

Servants are plentiful in Pakistan and India . . . in fact, in all or most of the eastern countries. But as a rule servants are servants. In many cases they are employed at that kind of thing because they are not suited or adapted to anything else or anything better. I often believe that a man becomes a servant because he refuses to accept responsibility. Therefore, he carries out the wishes of someone who is more intellectual, who has more ability and who is willing, not only to accept responsibility for himself, but for the servant as well. On many occasions I have had people moan to me about the incapabilities and the stupidity of their servants and I'd usually cut them short and end the tirade by saying, "If they had any more brains or ability, they certainly wouldn't be your servant and be carrying out your wishes and doing your dirty work."

Therefore, I want to explain that Shah Mirzah was not a servant. He was the P.A.'s house manager and, as such, he fulfilled his function admirably.

One day I asked the P.A. how he managed to get a jewel like Shah Mirzah and, what's even more important, how he was able to retain him. "He was here when I came to Gilgit," the P.A. said, "and he acted in the same capacity for my predecessor."

"It is a wonder to me," I said, "that your predecessor

didn't take him along with him when he left here!"

"I am very happy that he didn't!"

I expressed my liking for the Gilgit area and told the P.A. that I thought it had tremendous horticultural possibilities.

"Where do I go and what do I do and whom do I see about getting horses and a pack animal with which to go to Hunza?" I inquired of the P.A.

"I've already looked into that," he replied, "because I knew that there'd be no other way of your getting to Hunza. The Mir of Hunza phoned me the day before you arrived, asking if you had turned up yet. I expect he'll be calling again within an hour or two. He wanted to know if I could supply you with horses. Otherwise he said he would have to send horses and a pack animal down from Baltit.

"I realize it is a big job and, horses being extremely scarce and hard to get, it would be a shame to waste them all the way down here for nothing. So I assured him that while the situation here was also grim, I would procure animals for the journey.

"I had my secretary, Humayun Beg, busy on this and he has already located two horses and a donkey. He reported that one of the horses is fair and one is poor and the donkey is a sturdy, fine beast, but small. However, they are the best available in this district at the present time. I really wish it were possible for us to do better but the situation in the district concerning available animals is really very serious. In fact, it has been for quite some time. It is indeed unfortunate that someone didn't apprise you concerning conditions before you set out."

"But they did," I was quick to reply. "Months ago, in correspondence with the Mir, he told me and warned me that the roads were in very bad condition. In fact,

he suggested that I come in September when, in all probability, the jeep trail would be open for part or most of the way and I would find the going much easier.

"But I wrote and told the Mir that unfortunately I had to come during July and August or postpone the trip indefinitely. Therefore, I was warned and apprised of the situation and I have no complaints.

"When I first planned the journey and took careful stock of the situation from what I had read, from what earlier travelers advised me and most important, from the letters I received from the Mir, it was my clear understanding that I'd probably have to walk all the way from here to Hunza and I was quite prepared for that exigency and had even considered it as late as the time that we got off the plane at Gilgit. As long as a pack animal is available to carry our luggage and belongings, I am quite prepared to walk the entire distance."

He looked at me and smiled and said, "I believe you would, too, but you might find those Hunza trails tougher than you imagine."

He went on, "Every beast that's worthy of hire or can actually walk on its four feet is being pressed into service and being used for road repairs and on the farms."

"That reminds me," I said to him, "Are there many Hunza people living around Gilgit?"

"I'm glad you mentioned that," he said. "There are, at the present time, about a dozen Hunza farmers tilling the soil in this district. The farmers around Gilgit are getting concerned and worried about it."

"Why would they be worried? The Hunzans are mighty fine people . . . industrious, hard working, thrifty! Are they not?"

"Yes, that's exactly the trouble," said the P.A. "The Gilgit farmers are afraid that they won't be able to compete and the Hunza farmers will overrun the area. Further, I predict that this is exactly what will happen!

"You see, after a man has spent a lifetime or some years eking out an existence from the hard hills of Hunza, farming around Gilgit is like farming in paradise and they're making great strides here.

"They just can't be beat. Their industry, their methods, their behavior are all A-1. Besides, they are much healthier and stronger and can work harder and longer hours than the Gilgit citizens.

"I'm afraid there's a fair amount of resentment being built up on account of that. I hope that the Hunzan people, if they come, come gradually and not in any great influx. But with the very tight situation as it exists for land in Hunza, I'm afraid they'll come in fairly great numbers."

For my part, I was greatly impressed with the many potentials throughout the area. The Gilgit is actually a mighty river and it is one of the chief contributors to the famous, majestic Indus. The Gilgit can, without a shadow of doubt, be harnessed in many places and I sincerely believe it can produce sufficient power to supply all the electricity needed by the entire country of Pakistan. But, of course, there are many other rivers that could produce power, too.

Citrus fruits can be grown in the Gilgit area. From the best sources and from the information that I gathered, they seem to have no frost or perhaps, on rare occasions, only a nip and therefore, with smudge pots for emergencies, they should be able to grow citrus fruits in abundance, just as they do in California and Florida, where frost precautions are necessary.

I noticed the similiarity between the Gilgit district

and the Imperial Valley in California near the Mexican border. If there are any advantages, it is on the Gilgit side because they have inexhaustible supplies of good water which the Imperial Valley most certainly does not possess. There they have to pump and they have to pump from deep down, too, and it is costly, exhaustible and the water table drops drastically year after year. Although they get a fair amount of water from the old reliable Colorado River through the Boulder Dam, the quantity of water they do get from that source is jeopardized by the fact that so many states are demanding larger water rights. While the Colorado does carry an enormous quantity of water, it is not nearly enough to satisfy the demands of all these states who are clamoring for it. Here in Gilgit, the area could never even use a fraction of the water that is poured daily out of the Gilgit River. Besides, the Imperial Valley is a desert waste, whereas the Gilgit area is supplied with an abundance of comparatively good soil.

The P.A. was in touch with the air office at the airport and he learned that our luggage was not brought in on the first plane that morning. We were very disappointed and annoyed because it meant that we would again be delayed starting off to Hunza. There was no use arguing or worrying about it. We just couldn't start until the luggage came. First of all, there were gifts in it for the Hunzan people and food for our necessities along the route. So we just had to wait whether we liked it or not.

We made a cursory inspection of the bazaar in Gilgit and, unlike our shopping districts and stores, most of them are just what you might call "holes in the walls" or circus-style or temporarily erected buildings. But they are not temporary. Though dilapidated and of flimsy construction, they have been there for many years, even

hundreds. Yes, and they'll most likely be there without much change hundreds of years from now, too.

Usually they measure about 10 feet frontage and probably of similar height and depth, although they are often deeper. It could be a tailor, a dressmaker, a grocer, a fruiterer, cloth merchant, cobbler, bicycle repair man, baker, tinker, book seller or some other craftsman. Of some there were only one in the area and of others there were two or three, depending on the demand for that specific type of goods.

These bazaars, no matter where I saw them—in Lahore, Karachi, Delhi, Peshawar, even in Kabul—intrigued and attracted me like a magnet. Even the peculiar odors, smells or perfumes that emanated from these various establishments caused me no displeasure, although they might have seemed somewhat offensive to some people.

For a village like Gilgit the bazaar, in my opinion, was fairly large and consisted of maybe 100 or more various shops.

When we got back to the P.A.'s, he informed us that the last plane that came in from Pindi had brought our baggage. With that, we announced gleefully that we would be leaving at 6 o'clock in the morning. We had to pay an extra day's keep for our horses and donkey because they had been reserved in readiness for us, but that was understood and we agreed.

That evening the P.A. entertained at a dinner and had a few friends in and we were having a glorious time. While we were still out in the garden chatting and joking and sipping cold drinks with the P.A.'s guests, we heard the phone ringing in the office and a few minutes later I was called and told that the Mir of Hunza wanted to speak to me. I rushed to the P.A.'s office to talk to the Mir and, putting the receiver to

my ear, I said the usual worldwide greeting, "Hello!"

"This is Jamal Khan, the Mir of Hunza," the voice said, "Welcome to the area."

The English was perfect and the voice was as pleasant as music.

"I trust you are in good health, Friend."

"Yes, fine," I said.

"I hear you had a little trouble with your baggage," he went on.

"Yes, but it's all settled now."

"When are you leaving for Baltit?" he asked.

"We hope to get started at 6 o'clock in the morning."

Then the Mir said, "I've arranged for one of my men, who is a soldier in the Pakistan army coming home on leave, to guide you to Hunza. He will be waiting for you when you are ready to leave in the morning. His name is Sherin Johar. How far do you intend to go tomorrow? In how many stages do you intend or expect to make Baltit?"

"Well, I thought we'd make Nomal the first day and Chalt the second and then we'd go on to Baltit the third."

"That would be too much," the Mir said. "I suggest you take one day from Chalt to Minapin and then come on from Minapin the next day. That would take you four days instead of three. It has been my experience that even in four stages the journey is all that most people care to take."

"But we're anxious to get to Baltit to see you," I said.

"Yes, and I'm most anxious to see you, too, but still you'd best take four days."

"Well, I'll see how we feel when we get to Chalt and if circumstances allow, I'll call you from there. But as of now I'm calculating making the journey in 3 days. We'll try to make Nomal tomorrow afternoon."

"I'll be in touch with you at Nomal," said the Mir.

As I hung up the receiver, it occurred to me that it was certainly a wonderful thing and a wonderful feeling to come way out here, as close to a million miles from nowhere as a human being will ever get, and meet a friendly, understanding, helpful man like the P.A. and then from another remote section of the world comes a telephone call from a man, the ruler of a little independent country, who is interested in another individual's welfare. It convinced me that I was right about an old, old, old conviction and that is, that the world is all right—it's just *some* of the people in it who aren't!

CHAPTER 20

Trouble on the Hunza Trail

DIDN'T SLEEP WELL the last night. Something was wrong with Friend Cec. It seemed he was stirring between the bed and the bathroom all night. As the lights go off at 11 o'clock and do not come on again until 6, he had to use the flashlight to find his way.

I didn't want to add to my friend's troubles by asking him questions so I just lay there and tried my best to go to sleep after each interruption. But I did sense difficulties and trouble ahead.

Dysentery is to be feared greatly by visitors and travelers in that part of the world. In the first place, because of its devastating and weakening effect on the body, it can quickly sap a man of all his strength and energy. Then, if you add to this the time that has to be spent going to and fro and the discomfort and inconvenience caused, it can easily spoil not only a day but an entire trip or expedition.

From the accounts I had read previously and the actual discussions with individuals who had traveled in these parts of the world, I found that dysentery was actually one of the major worries and that very few ever came out from these visits and travels without having felt at least a mild dose of it. I'm not intending to propound my views and knowledge of this complaint but I was warned that if we were unfortunate enough to contact amoebic dysentery, then we would "have had it" . . . because that type of dysentery is almost impossible to shake and you might just as well give up any thought of travel or work.

Mind you, we had come prepared, to a limited degree, for such a contingency. But we were warned at the start by doctors that there was no sure immediate cure.

However, when Cec and I arose in the morning, we went about our preparations and apparently he showed no signs of grief and I was content to accept him at face value. As a matter of fact, from the moment Cec and I took the plane at Malton we had a tacit understanding that I wouldn't worry him and he wouldn't worry me. We would ask each other no embarrassing questions. If he wanted to tell me something, he could feel free to tell me and if he didn't want to tell me, that was strictly his business. The same principle was followed by myself.

The only source of annoyance on the entire journey, between Cec and myself, was that I would continually needle him about not eating sufficient raw vegetables and raw fruits. But from the outset, I respected my friend's wishes, rights and privileges and he did the same for me.

Breakfast was ready at 5.30 in the P.A.'s dining room. Just stop a moment to consider . . . we were strangers

to this man but, because we were his guests, he had changed the routine of his entire household so that we would have breakfast at 5.30, prior to taking off on our trip to Hunza.

We were chatting at the breakfast table after we had eaten when the P.A. said to me, "Do you have a hat?"

I said, "No, I don't have one. But I wish I had bought one at the bazaar yesterday. In fact, it was my intention, but I forgot about it. Yet I don't like one bit the idea of that hot sun beating down on my balding dome while we're crawling through those mountains."

When I left home, my wife had specifically gone out and bought me a sports cap. It was a loud affair—red and white stripes—a nice, neat, light, summer headpiece. But I, who hadn't worn a headpiece for more than 30 years didn't take to it kindly and it was excess baggage as far as I was concerned. Cec saw me tossing it about at every stopping place and he said, "If you're not going to wear that hat, I'll put it on!"

I said, "Go ahead! You're welcome to the darn thing! It's only a nuisance."

As we were about to head into the mountains I couldn't very well take the hat away from him because if I hadn't told him to go ahead and have it, he probably would have provided himself with something else.

Then the P.A. said, "Let me go and see if I can't find something suitable for the occasion."

With that, he disappeared, to return, but a few minutes later, with a real explorer-type pith sun helmet.

I tried it on and it was almost my size. It was a bit snug, as the P.A. had a little smaller head than I. Nevertheless, he offered to lend it to me and I quickly took him at his word. Am I ever glad I did, because I would have been a total physical wreck if I hadn't had that protection against the burning sun.

True to the Mir's promise, a Pakistani soldier was waiting for us when we came out of the P.A.'s office.

Our bags were carted out to where the horses and donkey were waiting. I appraised the two horses and, even though I am no judge of horse flesh, I realized that they were about as hopeless a pair of beasts as I had ever seen . . . and in a somewhat hopeful, joking, subtle voice, I said to myself, "They'll be lucky if they can carry themselves into Hunza, let alone carry my 185 pounds."

I selected for myself the poorer of the two horses, even though I was the heavier, for two reasons. First, because the choice was up to me, as I was in the compound first. Second, Cec's continual parade to the bathroom the night before had me greatly worried, although I said nothing about it and showed no sign of concern. Then, too, I felt that I was capable of walking the entire distance without any great distress. After looking at both animals, I knew that I'd prefer to walk!

It has always given me much pleasure to take long walks and I regularly take a 5 or 6 mile stroll from my home to my nursery and on occasions I've even walked the distance back, which makes a total of 12 miles. A 5 mile stroll is a pleasant interlude for me.

The horses were in readiness and the donkey was finally loaded. So I crawled aboard my pony, Cec followed suit and we were off!

I quickly found, to my great chagrin and discomfort, that my horse did not have a proper saddle, but a batch of blankets and something like a piece of hide or leather strung over it. Then, too, I didn't have stirrups—just two pieces of rope joined up with smaller pieces of rope filled with knots. Through these I was supposed to stick my feet and they were to perform the function of stirrups.

Then, when the reins, or lines as I call them on the farm, were put into my hands, I looked at them sort of ruefully. They were short pieces of leather sewn together . . . but they were leather. Old, yes—abused, yes—but still leather!

I noted that Cec's horse had a proper saddle and stirrups. I thought to myself, "Tobe, old boy, you're not very alert. In the first place, Cec has ridden as a boy and therefore, he knows how to ride. You've never ridden a horse before in your life—except for two lessons that you took before you left home. You don't have a decent saddle or stirrups and you're much heavier than Cec."

"But," I told myself, "you expected and intended to walk most of the way, anyway. Well, you'll have your chance—so what are you squawking about?"

Those two riding lessons had been a nightmare. A 15-year-old gal whose parents run a riding school not far from our nursery was my teacher and a darn good teacher she was, too—a real horsewoman, even at that age!

I had expected to find saddles like the ones we usually see in the movies—with a horn so I could cling to it for safety. But instead I was told to hold the lines lightly and to stay on the horse's back by means of pressing my knees against the horse's belly. I didn't confess to the young miss who was teaching me to ride, but I was scared to death every minute I was on the horse's back. It was only by the greatest effort that I could muster that I kept myself from hurtling into the air and landing on my head on the hard ground. Yet when I had completed the whole two lessons, I knew, at least, from which side of the horse to crawl on his back.

I had been introduced to the bearers or horse owners

the day before . . . not because of propriety, but simply because they had to be paid for the day's layover or lose them.

Each horse was led and cared for by its owner and one of them also owned the donkey. I'm sure the little donkey didn't stand more than 30 inches off the ground but he was a good looking, sturdy little beast. Our total baggage weighed about 150 pounds and the little animal didn't seem to mind this weight a bit.

The animals were guided out of the compound with the donkey in the lead. Then we started down the streets of Gilgit. The beasts just ambled along the street towards the bridge which was about a mile and a half away and crosses the Gilgit River. When we got to the bridge we were stopped and told to dismount as the rule on this bridge was that the horses had to be led across. I was glad to get off the horse's back. I wasn't a bit comfortable perched on those blankets atop the animal's sharp backbone!

The bridge swayed considerably as we walked over it. I surmised it must have been well over 100 yards long. Remember, the Gilgit is quite a river. The bridge is of wood and steel structure—well made, safe and sound. It would also carry a jeep over but there wouldn't be much room to spare widthwise, nor would speed be advisable.

As we got off the bridge our guide swung to the right and we followed. Now the real trek to Hunza began and we were following the south bank of the Gilgit River.

Our guide didn't speak English fluently but we could make ourselves understood after a fashion.

We were going to continue along the Gilgit River to the point where it meets the Hunza. Then we were to leave the Gilgit and continue along the Hunza.

While the Gilgit River is a broad, fast flowing, powerful, tremendous stream of water, it is generally not used for irrigation purposes, for the very clear-cut reason that they have no electricity and thus, no pumping stations. A conduit that runs from a glacier called Kargah supplies the water for irrigation and other purposes to the entire Gilgit area.

The amount of rainfall that this area gets is scant and not dependable . . . at the most, less than 6 inches annually, in any event. Thus, irrigation must be relied upon for crops.

We were plodding along quite comfortably through the sand. For quite some distance after crossing the bridge the road follows right along the bank of the river. In fact, the road is the bank and at this point we were only 50 yards or so from the river itself. I was finding the walking quite pleasant.

It was still not quite 7 o'clock in the morning. I thought we were the only people on the road, but on turning and looking back, I saw in the distance another figure. Then every few minutes I would, for some reason or other, turn around, and I noticed that the figure was gaining on us. Obviously he was traveling at a much faster pace than our party.

On seeing the soldier approaching us at a rapid pace (he was now close enough to be recognized as a soldier in uniform) Cec had slowed down so we would be together when he reached our party.

In a few more minutes he caught up to us. I looked him over carefully. He was a handsome young man, wearing a Pakistani army uniform. He had a stripe which would make him a lance corporal—if the same form of rank holds true in the Pakistani army as in the British.

"My name is Akbar Shape," he said, with a smile

on his face. "I'm on leave from the army and on my way to Hindi to enjoy a holiday with my family at home there."

"Oh, so you're from Hunza, too!" I said.

"Do you mind if I join your party up to Hindi?"

Sherin, our guide, that the Mir had sent along, nodded casually in recognition but he seemed to pay little attention and seemed to keep himself somewhat aloof of the meeting, greeting and proceedings.

"Why not?" I said. "We don't own the road. Besides, your English is much better than that of our guide. So I think we'd be pleased to have you come along with us. What do you say, Cec?"

"Glad to have more company," my friend replied.

Akbar then suggested that I mount my horse and ride.

"No," I said, "I intend to walk as long as I can. I'll only get on his back when I'm good and tired. In the first place, I'm not a good horseman and secondly, I do enjoy walking."

Then he said, "Well, if the pony isn't going to be used, would you object if I rode him?"

I said, "No, it's quite all right. Go ahead!"

There didn't appear to be any great amount of friendliness between the two soldiers. Actually I was glad to have this young fellow because we could make ourselves better understood. Besides, I knew I would have many questions to ask of him. But it appeared to me at that time that Sherin, our guide, didn't seem to like the idea too well.

The road continued through the grey sand along the river bank and there were no hills or mountains close by. But they were there in the distance—perhaps a few miles away.

If you have ever walked in sand, especially light

sand, you will find that it seems almost pleasant at first, but as you go on, it becomes quite tiring. And to make things worse, the sand earlier had been only a fraction of an inch on the surface—there being a firm bed underneath—and now it became quite deep and every time you put your foot down it sank in a few inches. You had to drag it out, lift it up and go on another step.

As we continued our plodding pace, I noticed that the mountains seemed to be closing in on us. The river was not widening out to the mountains, but the mountains were encroaching on the river.

It was starting to warm up and I began to feel the heat . . . and the closer we got to the mountains, the more I felt it. I was beginning to get thirsty so I asked Sherin how far we had to go before we'd find some water.

He motioned with his hand, indicating quite a distance and then he asked, "Me go get water—no?"

I looked in the direction he was pointing and the river's edge was probably 200 yards away. I shook my head negatively and said, "It's too far to go. Don't bother. I'll wait!"

Now we were beginning to climb and soon we came to the junction of the rivers . . . and continued along the Hunza.

The sun was getting hotter and I was getting thirstier. Now I recalled that before I left home my son, Stephen, had offered me his water bottle which he regularly uses on hiking and camping trips, but I said, "Naw, I don't want to drag that thing all the way to Hunza and then back again to you. Besides we're walking or riding along the banks of rivers and streams all the way up and back so what do I want a water bottle for?"

I remembered what my son had replied, too. "One never knows, Dad! They're handy things to have!"

Gosh, how I wished I had that bottle filled with water now!

By this time we had climbed up quite a distance and even if I wanted to go down to the river to get some water, it would be quite a hike down and a good climb back up.

I kept hoping we'd find a stream 'most any moment for by now my thirst was becoming actually uncomfortable. I could see the river below me and the water flowing down looked so cool and inviting, but by now it was about half a mile away!

I knew that the bearers had a bottle of water. I had known this right from the start because I had seen them handle it. They were not carrying it—it was tied somewhere on the little donkey. But as thirsty as I was, I had no desire or intent to take a drink out of it. In the first place, I had no idea where the water came from. Secondly, these men were not Hunzans. They were from Gilgit and early in our travels I learned there is a difference. Sure, they could drink the water with immunity but they were used to it and their body bacteria were built up to take care of them. I knew Cec was having trouble and one of us was enough. I resolved I'd die of thirst before I would take a sip from their bottle.

I knew that the bearers had a bottle of water. I had 3 miles at the most, and I'd have water and be comfortable again. But if I took a suck out of their bottle and wound up with a case of dysentery, I might not be able to shake it for quite a spell. Besides, the discomfort of thirst is not quite as bad as the discomfort of dysentery and its many attendant complications.

Further along, I noticed the bearers and the two

soldiers having a suck from their bottle without slackening their pace. Sherin asked me if I'd like a drink. He knew I was thirsty. In fact, he probably knew I was suffering. But when I turned down the proffered bottle, that was beyond his understanding. Whether he felt I was afraid to drink from the same bottle they drank from or I didn't want any part of their sustenance, I don't know, but I could tell by his puzzled expression that he just couldn't make out "these crazy people from the West."

Nevertheless I had to shut my eyes as I watched the heavenly liquid flow down their gurgling throats!

The trail was getting rougher. I was beginning to feel the altitude, as we had been climbing steadily for some time, and the heat as well . . . and to top it off, I felt my throat beginning to close up on me. I could no longer form any saliva or swallow.

"Sure," I thought to myself, "you didn't want to carry that bottle all this distance, but you would have gladly carried it twice the distance for one good long drink of water right now."

At this stage I began to reprimand myself, with some choice epithets, for not taking the trouble to go down to the river's edge earlier and fill myself full of that icy cold, delicious water. "It serves you darn well right for being so blamed lazy!"

"But it wasn't laziness," I countered to myself. "It was because I wanted to make time and get to Nomal sooner. Besides, if I had allowed Sherin to go to the river's edge and fetch some water for me, what would he have brought it back in—his hat? We didn't have a bottle or a suitable container to carry water."

Well, I knew I couldn't beat myself in an argument, so I let the matter drop.

Our party seemed to have broken itself up in an

orderly fashion, without any planning or discussion. The two bearers were in the lead with the little donkey. Cec was next and Akbar walked beside him on the left. Then I trailed with Sherin on my left.

I asked Sherin if he knew when we would be able to get some water.

Then he again pointed to the water bottle and I said, "No, thanks!" . . . waving my right hand in front of me in a typical declining manner.

"I want fresh water," I said to him.

"Two mile," Sherin replied.

I gritted my teeth, clenched my fists and said to myself, "What a fool you are—but it serves you right!"

Then I noticed one of the bearers drink the last of the water in the bottle and they didn't seem to be worrying about a fresh supply, so I assumed that water wouldn't be too far away.

So far Cec didn't express any need for water and I marveled at him. With slight variations we had eaten the same food ever since we left home, excepting that I did have more uncooked vegetables and fruits. Yet I was dying of thirst and Cec showed no apparent discomfort from this source.

Then I thought probably the fact that I was walking would make quite a difference. Obviously my body was giving off more moisture than Cec's as he was riding comfortably on his steed.

To add to my troubles, even though it was not yet 11 o'clock, it was hot! That is one thing I did not expect on this journey. I didn't have a thermometer with me but I know the heat was much worse than it gets at home. I judge it was very close to 100, and here I was dragging my feet through the sand and climbing—wearing a heavy sun helmet and suffering from the pangs of thirst.

By now my throat was almost closed.

I signaled ahead to the soldier who was riding my horse that I wanted to ride. He swung about quickly and was at my side in a matter of seconds. I mounted, hoping that I could push the horse on faster than I could walk so that I would reach water sooner. But the horse couldn't or wouldn't move any faster.

When, at last, the first stream of water appeared through the mountains, words could not describe my joy, my delight and my happiness. I had brought a metal extensible cup—the kind that telescopes up and can be flattened down and carried in the pocket without any trouble.

I took the first cupful while the others had their mouths to the trickle lower down. I passed the cup to Cec and when he was finished, I drank and drank until I was so filled up that I didn't dare open my mouth for fear it would spill out.

Then off we went again. Now I didn't care if the temperature rose to 130! My belly was full of water and I was quite content to walk, and I told the soldier he could mount again if he wanted.

I began to look for trouble about now because both the P.A. and Jahangir, whom I had met at the P.A.'s, had mentioned that, before we reached Nomal, we would hit some very bad pieces of road. In fact, they said, for quite a stretch we wouldn't be able to find any road.

Now the mountains began to take on a more ominous aspect. They were no longer distant hills—something that perhaps you didn't have to encounter. The trail was becoming steep, rocky, precipitous and I began to feel somewhat uncomfortable. I began to fear that the rest of the journey would probably be as bad as this or worse.

In these areas I learned that the best seasons for travel were the late summer, fall and even winter for then the roads are passable and comparatively safe and trouble free. 'Tis strange yet logical when you examine the facts. They do not have many heavy snowfalls but there is quite an accumulation on the slopes by the time spring rolls round. The thaws begin and things begin to happen—as well you might imagine—because it is the action of the thawing and freezing that has caused the transformation from rock to soil over a period of millions of years. And right now we were plump in the middle of that kind of area. Then in the summer there are the monsoons—unpredictable, dangerous—when the heaviest, if not all, of the year's rainfall takes place.

By now we were climbing noticeably and the terrain was changing rapidly. The road was no longer sandy but had become gravel and stone. There actually was no sign of the original road. We were in a slide area and it seemed to be getting worse all the time.

I was watching Cec up ahead of me on his horse and I marveled at his ability to be able to sit astride a horse for so many hours. It was now well past noon and we hadn't stopped but once to have that drink.

I perceived that the road was getting rougher with each step we took. The horses were picking their way very slowly. In fact, they were moving so slowly that I could easily outpace them on foot. All the time that we'd been walking through the sand, they had kept ahead of me. I couldn't keep up with them. But now, through this stone and rock, I was having no trouble whatsoever, maintaining their pace.

We had gone, I think, about 4 miles through this type of road and I wasn't enjoying it a bit! I kept thinking how amazing it was that the horses could

continue even at any stride or gait through these rocks and boulders.

I found that in crossing difficult road conditions and even on steep climbs or rugged descents, a human being in good condition could easily outdistance a horse.

This is one kind of terrain over which one does not ride recklessly. In fact, the logical thing to do is for the horseman to allow his animal to choose its own pace.

Because of the vicious going we were quite close together—practically bunched. Every one of the party, including the animals, was cautiously feeling his way over the rocks.

I was only a few feet from Cec when suddenly I heard him shout, "Catch me! Quick!"

I ran towards him, but Akbar, who had been walking alongside his horse on the left, was at his side. Cec weaved back and forth for a moment and then slouched to the left and the soldier held his body. By then I was by his side and the two of us eased his form slowly down from the horse to the rocky surface. Now he had lapsed into unconsciousness. By this time the bearers, noticing that there was trouble, stopped and hurried back to the scene. They took charge of both horses immediately.

CHAPTER 21

A Brave and Wise Decision!

I DON'T KNOW what time it was when this event occurred, but from the data and my memory, it must have been between one and two o'clock.

Akbar held Cec's head in his lap. I was on my knees beside him. I looked about—perhaps there was a bit of shade close by—but not a sprig of grass could be found, let alone a shrub or bush. Nor could we even find a boulder to break the sun. Then I figured that if we lifted him and carried him over to the side of the mountain and propped him up against it, at least we could prevent him from getting sunstroke.

So the three of us, Sherin, Akbar and myself, carefully and gently lifted Cec off the road and carried him to the mountain wall. Then we stood beside him, keeping the direct rays of the sun from his body.

Up to this point, I estimated, we had traveled about 12 miles, and during that entire distance we had not

passed one single shrub or tree—not since we crossed the bridge at Gilgit. Therefore we had no protection anywhere along the walk against the piercing rays of the sun. The river was too far away or too far down for us to derive any cooling benefits from it.

I was watching Cec. As yet he showed no signs of coming out of his faint and I was worried. I figured, "We'll have to send for a jeep and have him carried either back or forward to meet it. Nomal can't be much more than 5 or 6 miles ahead of us and surely this terrible rock strewn area that was once a road can't go on forever!"

An ambulance was out of the question because there just wasn't one within 500 miles of the place and if there was one, it couldn't get within 350 miles of where we were. A jeep might be available from Gilgit, but there were 5 miles of rocks and boulders over which no jeep on earth could travel. I had seen with my own eyes that the road was absolutely impassable by any wheeled vehicle. Just beyond the location where Cec had collapsed, a horse carrying a rider could not possibly cross for the simple reason that the horse would have all it could do to scramble across itself.

I addressed Akbar, who spoke the best English and said, "I think we'll have to send one of our men either back to Gilgit or ahead to Nomal to arrange for a jeep or some other means of conveyance. I'm afraid my friend is too sick to walk or ride any further."

He replied, "Jeep can't come here!"

"No, I realize that a jeep can't come here. But it can be driven to a point 4 or 5 miles back from whence we just came. They can cross that piece of flat desert road just as well as we can."

'Tis strange how a feeling of despair and helplessness can take hold of one. I felt as though everything

I'd worked for, hoped for and dreamed of for years lay like the rubble of stones at my feet.

I heard Akbar say, "Nomal only 3 or 4 miles!", but even that short distance seemed like a million miles at that stage.

Just about then Cec opened his eyes and I mumbled a prayer of thanks. We didn't even have a drop of water to give him.

"What do you say, boy?" I said to him, trying to act nonchalant. "How are you feeling?"

"Quite a bit better," he replied and, strange to relate, he didn't look very ill.

"Just what did happen?" I asked Cec. "I hadn't the faintest suspicion or thought that anything was wrong with you. In fact, I was complimenting ourselves for the good luck we were enjoying, for we've been on the road about 8 hours. Knowing what was happening to you last night, I expected inconvenience, delays and such and I was delighted and happy that we had got along so well so far."

"I don't know what happened," he replied. "I thought it was the horse that was weaving and suddenly I realized that it was I. I'm glad I had the good sense to call to the soldier before I fell off."

"Yes," I said, "you're darn lucky he was so close, too. Landing with your head on those boulders wouldn't have helped your situation any!"

"They say we've only about two or 3 miles to go to the comfortable rest houses at Nomal," I lied. (They had said 3 or 4 and I knew it was at least 5 miles.) "I spoke to the soldiers about the possibilities of getting a jeep close to here somewhere, but it looks as though we'd have to make it at least two or 3 miles in either direction on foot before we could get to the jeep. (Again I was minimizing.) But nevertheless, that

would take hours and hours before it could be arranged."

"I feel a heck of a lot better," Cec said. "I'd like to try to walk."

So with a soldier on each side and Cecil's arms around their shoulders and with my cautioning to them to walk slowly but firmly, we started out. As close as I can figure it, they walked Cecil about two miles in that fashion, but two miles is a long way over rocks and boulders. The only variation was in the size of the rocks—occasionally there were a few huge ones which made it necessary to detour around them. There was no use putting Cec on a horse because he was too dizzy and would have fallen off again. Besides I doubt if a horse could have carried him over this murderous terrain.

Soon we passed a small nullah and all of us, including the horses, stopped for a cool refreshing drink of ice cold glacial water which, but a few short minutes ago, had been ice on a mountainside. Then after a few minutes' rest, we were off again.

It was now about 2.30 and we still hadn't had a bite to eat, for a few good reasons. We hadn't brought any solid food with us and there was no place on the road to get anything—not a hut or a bit of human habitation had we encountered.

When we started from Gilgit we were of the impression that it was 17 miles to Nomal and we figured we could do that in 5 or 6 hours and at Nomal there is a rest house where we could obtain food. In our kits we carried ample supplies of Bovril, Oxo and cubes of chicken soup, as well as coffee, tea and a food-drink called Sustigen. But to make use of these we needed hot water—and what would we use for fire? There wasn't a splinter of wood to be found. We

did carry an emergency set of utensils.

Here we were on the trail already 8 hours and we were nowhere near Nomal—at least, it wasn't within sight. From the best calculations that I was able to make we were not averaging a full one and one-half miles an hour and the going was hard at that.

In my normal walks in the country, I average 4 miles an hour and do not strain myself in the least to maintain that pace. It is utterly unbelievable that on this terrain with a horse we were unable to do more than one and one-half miles an hour.

Now I noticed that the boulders were becoming smaller and I hoped that maybe this was nearly the end . . . and it was! Within another few paces the road appeared. It was narrow—it was winding—it had a rock or a boulder here and there—but it was a road!

Quickly the horse was brought up. Cec was assisted on and held in place. Akbar then got on behind him, put his arm around Cec's waist and held the reins. So off he went, with my prayers! He was heading for the guest house.

In a minute or two we rounded a turn and I could see the green swaths of Nomal in the distance . . . a few trees, a green and golden patch here and there. It was the first sign of civilization I had seen since we left Gilgit that morning at 6 o'clock.

While I could see the village in the distance and believed it to be only a mile or so away, it was much further than that. I quickly learned that one must not judge distance in the mountains because a curve or two and a bit of a climb or a descent could knock two or 3 miles into a cocked hat!

It was almost 5 o'clock when I reached the rest house at Nomal. Cec had been there for well over an hour. He was able to wash and clean up and go to

bed. Again I offered a prayer and profound thanks!

Cec had already instructed the soldier to procure some eggs, hot water and fruit and given him 10 rupees to start with. Actually all we needed was hot water, for then we could make tea and soup and, if worst came to worst, that would sustain us. Cecil also had opened that tin of Sustigen, which acted upon the stomach the same as solid food and was just what he needed. I tasted a lick of it and it seemed to me as though it were just the same as malted milk—very flavorful and nourishing.

Starting at Gilgit, all the way into Nagir and Hunza, one finds rest houses, guest houses, bungalows or dak bungalows, as they are often called. They were originally constructed during the time of the British rule for the specific purpose of looking after wanderers who happened to be in that part of the world. There is actually no other provision made for people from other countries who happen to visit the area.

We had come equipped with sleeping bags and mosquito netting in the event we had to sleep outdoors or who knows where. I had read of the bungalows and their provision and use for travelers like ourselves and expected to use them wherever possible. But invariably only one of these bungalows was located in the smaller communities like Nomal, for example, although the larger centers where travelers came more frequently had more than one bungalow.

The rest house usually consisted of two separate compartments, each with two beds in it. Generally, they were stucco affairs. Some of them seemed to be built of stone, whitewashed cleanly on both the inside and the outside. The roof was constructed of heavy timbers to hold the thick earthen covering. Bathroom facilities usually consisted of a separate chamber ad-

joining one of the rooms and was equipped with a commode chair with a small handled pot underneath it. Invariably there was a wooden stand on which there was an enamelware basin.

In some of the bungalows we found old iron bathtubs and even some attempts at a sort of shower. The conveniences varied from place to place. In some of the guest houses the two large rooms were joined together by doors. In others they were entirely separate. Some of them even had separate toilet conveniences for each room.

The bungalows were approximately 30 feet long and about 15 feet wide which, when divided in two, would give two rooms approximately 15 feet square. There were windows to provide ample light and ventilation. All of the rest houses we found on our travels were clean and quite comfortable. This one at Nomal had the usual two rooms with large doors adjoining them but only one with bathroom facilities. Cec and I took separate rooms as both were unoccupied.

The beds are, what are known in the East as charpoys. They are just like the beds we have at home except, instead of a mattress or a spring, the frame is interwoven with either string or strips of broad linen about two and one-half inches wide. We found them just as comfortable as springs and mattresses.

Most of the bungalows also had fireplaces in them but no provisions for cooking. For this you had to rely upon the chowkidor and we found it expedient to ask for hot water or tea on occasions. There was no need to light a fire in the fireplace because the weather was very warm. But, had we desired a fire, I don't know where we could have got wood—although I'm sure the chowkidor would have provided some chips at a very high price—because wood is scarce all the way

from Gilgit to the Chinese border. The further north you get, the more precious wood becomes. In fact, it is so scarce that it is often used for gifts.

There is no doubt about it, the bungalows are a godsend to any man traveling in these regions. No Westerner would even consider taking shelter in the average homes as I saw them in Nagir or Hunza . . . not because they are dirty or inadequate, but simply because they do not have the same standards of comfort, cleanliness and convenience that we are accustomed to in the West. The rest houses do make an attempt to provide early Western standards.

This, of course, does not apply to the homes of people like the P.A. or the Mir who are accustomed to having visits from Europeans and Americans and therefore provide their guests with many or most of the comforts that they enjoy at home. Then, too, I should add that both the P.A. and the Mir are accustomed to similar comforts themselves.

Our sleeping bags were spread on the charpoys and we needed no lullabying to fall off to sleep that night.

CHAPTER 22

I Fall In Love With Rakaposhi

IN SPITE of the fact that I was very much troubled about my Friend Cec's condition, I had a good night's sleep. Without doubt, the fact that I was absolutely dead tired had a lot to do with it.

"How'd you make out, fella? Get any sleep?" I asked Cec when I arose.

"Slept quite well! In fact, better than I would have believed I could. But my condition has not changed much."

From our experience of the previous day we had learned that it is vitally important to get off to the earliest possible start. So we had told our soldiers to have things ready to leave at 5 o'clock.

Cec and I were up and ready at 5, but there was no sign of the horses or their owners. We sent our soldiers, who had slept outside our door, scurrying around to try to get them ready and at the same time

to try to locate us a bit of hot water so that we could make ourselves some tea or coffee.

You'd think, in this part of the world where early rising was vitally important, that things would be in some sort of condition or arrangement to allow for such take-off. But no, we found it extremely difficult to get a rise out of anybody.

It was after 6 before we started along the trail towards Chalt. Our so-called guide had informed us that today we would have shade trees and shrubs and roads lined with them. So as we plodded slowly on we kept waiting for the promised shade. But mile after mile and hour after hour, the burning sun was beating down upon us and I kept mumbling to myself about how much the guides really knew about the country, for rarely did a shrub or tree make its appearance—although there were many herbaceous plants and an occasional feathery but straggly tamarisk shrub.

Normally, plodding through heat of this nature and climbing continually either up or down, I would be sweating like a race horse carrying maximum weight after a two mile race. But not a sparkle or drop of sweat appeared on my body.

I drank water copiously at every stream or water course—gallons and gallons of it. But not a drop seemed to remain in my stomach for more than a few minutes.

If perchance you are under the impression that climbing through these mountains and at this altitude, always between 7,000 and 12,000 feet, you are nice and cool, I want to correct that impression here and now, because it was just as hot as if you were walking in the burning desert at midday. In fact, I have motored and walked through the Mojave and the Nevada deserts where the thermometer registered 127 degrees

and it was no hotter than I felt right here. In fact, I later learned that such degrees of temperature are expected during July.

With towering, snow-covered peaks surrounding you on every side and with streams right from the frozen glaciers, running here and there, you'd think it would be cool. Except for the bits of terraced gardens or a bit of flat land that was found occasionally in or around the villages, the rocks were barren and metallic and they threw off that heat like a roaring furnace!

Once in a while, when we rounded a bend, we would get a blast of breeze that must have originated over or flown over a glacier or snow-capped mountain. Whenever this occurred, no matter how precarious the site, I stood for a few minutes enjoying it.

I doubt if, throughout the entire journey, we spent one cool hour—except once, when we lay down beside the Dumani Nullah that started somewhere along the upper slopes of Rakaposhi. The water was frigid and came racing at a terrific speed—hurtling, cascading, bowling. We lay down as close to the water's edge as we dared get and rested there. It was cool and oh, how we hated to get up and leave to continue our journey!

The road conditions were not improving by any stretch of the imagination. In fact, the terrain here was worse than it had been all along. Obviously the work teams or road building crews hadn't managed to reach this far.

We, our horses and our pack animal weaved in and around boulders and huge slabs of rock that blocked our path. Now, we seldom found a decent level piece of road—not even 100 feet of it. It was winding, climbing and winding up, over and around, up, up, up, wind and up, wind and up . . . and then the thing

would be reversed and we'd be going down in the same fashion. But we were always going a little more up than we were down.

Occasionally, when we did get down to about the river's level, it was sandy and our feet sank into the sand and we had to pull a few pounds of it with every stride.

It seemed that we were making better time, but on checking our watches and the mileposts, we still weren't making more than one and one-half miles an hour!

One of the disadvantages of having to make time and trying to reach a goal at a certain hour is the fact that one cannot give proper attention to and appreciate the grandeur and beauty that surrounds you. The pity of the situation is accentuated when you realize that in all probabilities you will never be here again and yet, you are failing to absorb views that most human eyes never see. Here you are immersed in it up to your ears and you are not making anywhere near the best of your opportunity.

Everywhere, whether you turned to the right or to the left or looked close by or far, far off in the distance, were sloping, graceful, sweeping peaks, many harsh in their blackness and others soft and melting. As I gazed about I could have counted dozens of peaks, all of which I knew were 20,000 feet or more and as yet unnamed . . . and what is even more certain, unscaled and unconquered.

But there, alone, aloof, like a reigning queen serenely sitting—a true monarch of all she surveyed—sat Rakaposhi . . . her summit crowned by wisps of clouds that seemed to lend an aura of saintliness, like a halo. In this setting she looked truly majestic.

I followed the contours of her lovely, flowing form

until my eye reached what appeared to be a forest of pines about a mile or so from the summit. At this point where I was standing Rakaposhi could not have been more than 7 or 8 miles away and I judged that the bristles on her side, which, from here, looked like a patch, were but 10,000 feet above me. On her bosom could be seen the eternal snows that lay like glittering, glowing breasts. And against the background of blue sky, she was like a precious jewel in a most beauteous setting.

I saw now why the men who were privileged to see her have stated that she is the loveliest of mountains . . . that her elegance, her dazzling stately beauty is unmatched by any mountain in the world.

She has only been scaled once, to the best of my knowledge, and that was in 1958. Many have tried and failed. She has long been considered unscalable because one of her sides has a sheer precipice which finalizes in one colossal sweep of more than 20,000 feet. It is said, authoritatively, to be the most stupendous mountain face in all the world.

Travelers, writers and scholars have seen her and tried to describe her. Adjectives like adorable, arrogant, stately, dazzling, serene, peerless, majestic, charming, lovely and, oh, many more have been used to portray her ethereal beauty . . . and I could see why, too. On the trail I had a hundred views and good looks at Rakaposhi and each and every single one of them was different . . . yet all of them were a combination of beauty and loveliness beyond the phrasing of mere words.

As the day wore on and it was getting close to noon, I found that my mount, even though I used him only occasionally, was tiring badly. I had to keep prodding him in the belly or whipping him with my so-called

whip, a bit of string, which he probably didn't even feel. But I couldn't get any speed out of him. In fact, he kept stopping, no matter what I did, and I believe he was physically exhausted. I was only on his back about one mile out of three but even that was too much for him. Now I no longer permitted the soldier to mount him when I got off.

We were making progress slowly but steadily.

I had to admire the pace and the agility of my Hunzan soldiers. I couldn't help but compare them to the two bearers, who, incidentally, were from Gilgit. One of the bearers was just a youngster—I'm sure in his early teens. He moved in the normal manner, somewhat like our youngsters would but the other bearer, who was a few years older, had a sort of halting, sliding gait. He could best be described as someone on ice skates. He kept pushing himself forward in an ice-skating way. Then, his body would lurch forward as he would bring it up to maintain his equilibrium. When he started out this way at Gilgit, I was watching every moment to see him fall forward on his face. But as the miles and the hours went on and he didn't seem to change one iota, I assumed that this was his mode of progression. But they both were in direct contrast to the two soldiers who seemed to move effortlessly.

I'm a good walker. I enjoy walking and have practiced that marvelous sport and exercise since childhood. I wish—oh, how much I wish—that I could learn to walk with the grace, ease, comfort and agility that these Hunzan men knew and practiced. I regret my inability to describe their method of walking in detail. My vocabulary just isn't up to giving an adequate description of the gait of these Hunzan men. I have seen it nowhere else in my travels. No, even the Nagirwals didn't walk anything like the Hunzans.

If this is adding to the illusions about these people, I must apologize and say I'm sorry. But I'm relating what is a truth from my observations of many miles of travel.

I heard the bearers talking to the soldiers in Urdu and they mentioned something about "Chechipar." It sounded rather familiar and they mentioned it over and over again. So I asked Akbar if what they were talking about was Chaichar Parri, and he nodded.

Then Akbar went on to say that neither he nor Sherin had been in Hunza for almost a year and therefore they didn't know road conditions. But other travelers had informed them that the last time they were through this way the trail along the cliff was completely wiped out and you couldn't get across in the normal way.

"This Chaichar Parri," he went on, "is a continual source of trouble to travelers and people going up and down the road because they can never tell whether or not they'll be able to get across without involving great difficulty or taking an alternate route!"

The story that Akbar was telling me dovetailed neatly with the reports I had heard and read about this eminent butte. So, with some misgivings on my part, we pushed forward.

Trying my best to just forget about it so as to avoid distressing myself, I whistled as I walked. But 'twas not for long! I soon found that my misgivings were based on sound foundations . . . for here we were . . . on the brink!

CHAPTER 23

Facing An Impasse

"THE ROCK SLIDES at Chaichar Parri are famous all right!" I thought to myself. "I know I'll never forget them!"

At the very least, once every year the winds went crazy wild in this particular area. There is something about the formation, position and shape of the monstrous cliff that causes currents of a violent nature . . . and they carry with them rocks and debris which create landslides. Now, Chaichar Parri was living up to its reputation!

I knew the road to Hunza wasn't sprinkled with roses or daisies, but by the same token, I hadn't expected it to be a combination of the Rocky Road to Dublin and the Highway to Hades.

We just had to get across that abyss if we were to continue on to Baltit and the Mir's palace. What's more, the Mir would be waiting for us as we had

arranged, and I didn't want to disappoint him. And what was even more important, I didn't want to disappoint myself!

But this damnable predicament had me worried for another good reason. Cec's condition hadn't improved. He was just gritting his teeth and bearing up under it —carrying on because he knew to do anything else was to risk death. By the dint of his indomitable spirit and courage we had gone on and here we were.

I was brought back to our immediate problem and the desperation of our situation when our two soldiers and the animals' keepers began to hold a consultation. Cec and I sat by and watched them and waited.

It was obvious that no animal could cross this road because there just wasn't any road. A huge slide had taken everything with it. But a man might creep or crawl across if he dug his feet firmly into the loose sand, gravel, slag and scree. Of course, in doing this, you might cause another slide and wind up at the bottom with half of the world on top of you or you might roll a little further out and land in the waters of the rushing river.

The eventual decision was that 3 of our 4 men take the horses and the donkey over the upper trail, a narrow treacherous defile about 500 feet above us which only an experienced mountaineer could tackle. Then when they had crossed from the upper ledge they would tether the horses and the donkey and come back and carry across the luggage. Of course they would have to unload the luggage where we stood before they tackled the upper road.

They seemed to think that we would be safer crawling over this mess of landslide than taking the upper trail. Why they thought this I don't know because you were sure as blazes risking your life trying

to crawl across the cone of debris where we were and I couldn't see where the upper trail could be any more dangerous. But we assumed that they knew what they were doing and we allowed their plan to be put into effect.

By this time other wayfarers had appeared on the other side and they were doing likewise. So now we realized that this was the regular procedure.

Our original Hunzan guide, Sherin, led the way across and the other three went back, as it was about half a mile or more back before they could get onto the upper trail.

I didn't look down while crawling on hands and feet, and made it without a flurry. But when I got over to the other side and looked down at the river below, I'm sure my heart missed half a dozen beats. Had I looked down before, and thank heaven I had enough sense not to, I would never have dared try to get across. I would have chosen the upper trail even if it meant my life.

I'm still sort of muddled concerning the rhyme or reason of having us find our way across the moraine. The slide must have been a most recent one because there were only a few footsteps on the pile of moraine —no trail—which meant that very few had crossed before us. Whether the slide happened an hour before we reached there or several hours before, we are unable to say but it couldn't have been very long.

It is quite possible that many others had come before but most took the upper trail when they found that this lower one was wiped out. That was fine if they had no baggage or heavy belongings. Yes, in that case, they would have been justified in taking the upper road because the upper road was obviously too narrow to allow for the passage of a laden animal. Now

that I was safely on the other side I thought how easily one misstep or even a movement of the pile could have caused a slide. Piles of sloping debris of stone, sand, pebbles and slag can be made to start a slide by the mere fall of a single pebble. Had this started, chances of coming out of it alive would have been remote.

So, even to this day, I am puzzled as to why we took that route across, instead of following the horses over the upper, older trail. We of course assumed they knew what they were doing and were following the common sense rules of safety and we followed their bidding. But I still wonder!

I watched for the men and horses to appear above. After a considerable wait the first man, Akbar, appeared with a horse and as he got smack in the middle just above us the horse stopped dead and wouldn't go an inch further. The soldier pulled, pleaded, yanked, coaxed but to no avail.

The horse was obviously scared to death and it appeared that he had good reason to be scared, for at this point on the upper trail the rock bellies out right at the sharp turn. It meant that the horse could not walk around it without his belly scraping the mountainside. And as he didn't want his belly scraped and he couldn't walk further out for fear of falling over, he just stopped dead.

There they were, hundreds of feet above (I was high enough!) on a narrow ledge of rock, with the guide tugging and pulling to get the horse off the narrow trail! He shouted to the others to stay where they were or go back and we took up the cry, too. Evidently they heard and understood.

So, leaving the other horse and the donkey in charge of one of the men, the third man went forward to try

to help the soldier get the horse off the ledge. He got there, grabbed the horse's tail with one hand and holding it taut and with a whip made of a stick in the other, he beat upon the horse's flank until slowly but surely they got the horse to go forward and clear the path.

I managed to take a shot with my camera of the scene but my own perch was precarious and, with the shouting of the men to get the horse to move and all the other commotion, I didn't do too good a job.

Believe me, I am not trying to convince you of my bravery, because I know that I am not brave. But I do want to give you as true an account of the trails and the conditions found there as I possibly can.

Maybe those fellows are used to it but believe me, I expected at any moment to see horse and soldier and bearer come tumbling down and land a couple of thousand feet below in the Hunza River.

So far I hadn't been impressed with the need or use for horses on our trip. No doubt about it, horses are very useful for certain work, especially on a farm. I know for certain that up until the tractor and trucks came along in America, horses played a most important role in our economy.

For years I've read and heard tales about the surefootedness of a horse, its powers of endurance, its strength and other yarns that I believe are fanciful. I know that in actual tests a man can outrun a horse—not in a mile, but at the longer distances. Further, a man can stand a lot more hardship than a horse.

Believe me, I am no judge of horseflesh nor of the use or value of a horse but, in this wild and woolly, rough, tough and difficult country, a man can far better trust his legs than those of any horse. If I were to do a jaunt of this type over again, I'd get me a little

donkey like the one we had with someone to beat, kick and cuff it, of course. Otherwise, they tell me, they won't go . . . but I don't believe it.

Then I'd walk and when I got tired, I'd sit or lie down and rest. I am quite confident that I would do more miles in a day this way than I could on the back of a horse. Well, look at it this way. On a very steep climb you should get off your horse, anyway. On a steep downgrade you should get off. And on flat country, who wants a horse?

No, it's not quite as bad as I have illustrated here. But even from the most sagacious counsel I could get, it was admitted that the horse was strictly for comfort. Well, who in his right mind would expect comfort on the Hunza Trail? I do, however, admit that after tiring badly while climbing, it was restful sitting on top of a horse for a stretch.

They soon had the luggage carted across the missing piece of road and we started off on the last few miles towards Chalt . . . Cec riding and me walking. My bearer was leading my horse.

You can always see the terraced fields or the green of the trees and orchards in the distance long before you reach them—if not from one level, then from any one of the many others.

Chalt is a fairly good sized community right at the gateway to Nagir which is supposed to be the rival state of Hunza. For some reason or other there have been feuds and ill feelings between these two states for centuries and, back a hundred or more years ago, there used to be wars between these two peoples. But now they live in comparative peace. The only animosity that is ever shown is just verbal.

The Hunzans invariably spoke disparagingly when they spoke of the people of Nagir. They let you and

everyone else know that they considered themselves superior to the Nagirwals. And from what I saw, heard and came in actual contact with, I'm afraid I have to agree with the opinions that were handed down before, and that is, that the Hunzans undoubtedly are superior to the Nagirwals.

Still, that isn't terribly strange because from what I found out about the Hunzans, I believe they are superior to most people. Therefore, the people of Nagir shouldn't feel slighted or too bad on account of this.

The rest houses at Chalt were found to be in much better condition than those at Nomal. The chowkidor was a more capable and amiable fellow and procured for us the food that we wanted . . . eggs and apricots. Best and happiest of all, for the first time we got an ample supply of boiling water.

We had ourselves more or less comfortably established and we reclined on our beds. 'Twas only late afternoon but we could have gone to sleep there and then. However, that was not to be for we began to hear sounds of stirring, movement and commotion outdoors . . . then noises like talking and shouting. I was too content and tired to get up and see what was happening, but I knew by the guttural sounds that a lot of people who spoke a foreign language had come into the yard of the rest houses.

Our soldiers came in and told us that a large German expedition that was trying to conquer Diran had arrived on the scene and they were pitching their tents in the courtyard.

Had we arrived an hour later and had the German party arrived ahead of us, we'd have had to sleep on the grass or rocks and do without toilet facilities. We were fortunate enough to have beaten them and were very happy to have the comforts . . . and we were in-

tending to enjoy them!

We lay peacefully inside, meditatingly congratulating ourselves on our good fortune, when Sherin came in and told me that the chowkidor had given him a message. He went on to say that the Mir had called on the telephone to find out if we had yet arrived and when he said we hadn't yet reached there, the Mir left instructions to be sure to have me call as soon as possible.

I got up off the charpoy where I was semidozing and said, "O.K., Sherin, lead the way and I'll follow."

Cec said he would remain where he was. He was quite comfortable and there was no need for him to come along. I could tell him when I came back what the Mir said.

I followed Sherin out the door and along the roadway from the rest houses. We turned left, and went down the road. In a minute we were going down a steep hill that swung to the right and then again to the left, where we had to cross a bridge over another one of the many furiously flowing nullahs. This one was a more important, dependable stream known as the Chalt Nullah.

There, on the other side of the bridge, on the left bank of the river, stood a solid looking square-shaped stone house. Sherin said he would find the chowkidor who also acted as the operator and that he would let me know as soon as he got in contact with the palace at Baltit.

I wandered about, sticking quite close to the building, though, so as to be within calling distance when he made contact with the palace at Baltit. I peered over the bank of the river and when doing such things one really wants to be careful because along these banks and everywhere throughout this area I found that there were no guard rails or other protective measures. It

was assumed that anybody who was in the area would know enough to take precautions and not walk where he shouldn't be walking. A misstep or a step on a loose rock or stone would hurtle you into the raging waters below.

Then I heard Sherin calling that the Mir was on the phone and I rushed into the building.

"I see you got to Chalt all right," was the first thing he said. "I am glad! And how is your friend?"

"He is stronger and better than I expected. He has a lot of courage and determination," I added.

"He must have," the Mir replied. "I'm waiting to meet a man who has shown such spirit and determination."

"I'm hoping you'll meet him tomorrow," I replied.

"Tomorrow?" queried the Mir. "Surely you're not going to come on from Chalt to Baltit in one day."

"We're sure going to try," I replied.

"Well, don't you think it would be best to take two days? Wouldn't you be better off to stop at Minapin tomorrow?"

"No," I replied, "I'm quite determined to go on to wherever the jeep is tomorrow, even if it means traveling all day and most of the night!"

"You, too, are a most determined man," replied the Mir.

"Yes, but I feel 'tis best and wisest. Time is an important consideration. I think the sooner I get my friend Cec, where he can get some good attention, rest and food, the better it will be for him. Right now he's operating purely on his stamina and courage."

"That is something that we Hunzans appreciate," replied the Mir. "I will have the jeep waiting for you as far along the road as conditions will allow it to travel and I will send my three sons along to meet you.

Be careful and good luck!" he said, as he rang off.

Just before the voice of Sherin had called me to the phone, I had noticed another sort of hut below the piece of bank on which I was standing and now I said to Sherin, "What is that building down there below us?"

He replied in Burushaski and when that failed to elicit any understanding from me, he repeated the word in Urdu. This didn't fare any better. Then he waved for me to follow. He led me carefully down a rocky, hazardous trail that led under the bridge and there, about 50 feet below, was the stone hut, perched what appeared to be precariously, but yet solidly, on the foaming nullah's edge.

We went in the open doorway and, lo and behold, it was a mill—a real, genuine stone flour mill! I examined it carefully. I wanted to know what everything was used for and how it was done. Again he told me all the names in Burushaski and I remember repeating after him, "Millstone—sal, hopper—dor, paddle—naro, penstock—whoor."

But the mill was not operating at the moment and I motioned with my hand that I would like to see the thing going around and around. So he walked outside the door and hollered at the top of his voice for someone and eventually a head craned over the bridge and Sherin explained to the man that he wanted him to turn on the water.

I waited in the mill building and suddenly I felt and heard the rushing water below me and the millstones began to revolve, faster and faster until they were spinning at a tremendous pace. After I had had my fill of the scene I decided to go up and see how he steered the water so it would turn the paddle that in turn revolved the stone.

So up we climbed again and in sign language I indi-

cated to Sherin that I wanted to see where the water came from. When we got to the top, he led me upriver a few hundred paces. They had gone back about a quarter of a mile and channeled a part of the fast flowing river water into a conduit. But instead of taking the fast drop that the nullah took, it was graduated to flow rather evenly. Then about 25 feet from the bridge they had again channeled off a narrow penstock which consisted of three boards to guide the water right down below, under the floor of the mill. It was this fast flowing water that struck the paddle and worked the mill.

At this stage I felt that this was more or less the end of a perfect day. We had overcome a difficult obstacle; Friend Cec had not emitted one sign or sound of difficulty; I had talked to the Mir; I'd seen my first Hunzan flour mill; and I'd gone to the source of a conduit and learned how 'tis done. Now I was ready to go back to the bungalow and get some rest in preparation for our big day tomorrow.

CHAPTER 24

One Long Hop

IT IS APPROXIMATELY 36 miles from Chalt to Baltit and I had figured that even if we could make two miles an hour (which we hadn't made so far on the trip) it would still take us 18 hours to get there. However, from this we'd have to deduct the hours and the mileage from the point, if and where we met the Mir's jeep.

In Gilgit we had been told that the Mir's jeep could travel between 4 and 5 miles from Baltit before it reached the impassable part of the road. But as you know, hope wells within the human breast and I kept praying that they'd had a few days' time in which to clean up the road and maybe the jeep could come 10 miles. Therefore, if that miracle could take place, it would cut as many as 5 hours from our journey. We had a minimum of 13 hours' trek ahead of us.

We had already learned that one and a half miles an hour was the maximum speed that one could ex-

pect with good horses and good feet and we had poor horses.

Strange to relate, up until now we had not yet set foot on Hunza territory, but practically all the way along the route we could see the opposite side of the river and the trail to Hunza—that is, the old trail. It showed like a thin wisp of smoke near the top of the mountains and we were really happy that we didn't have to take that high, arduous route. The trail that we were now on was a new and improved way to Hunza and even it taxed the strength of good animals and good men . . . and I'm not referring to myself.

On leaving Chalt, after you have crossed the bridge over the spewing nullah and pass by the little flour mill and the telephone station or barracks, one of the first things to greet you is the home or palace of the Mir of Nagir. It was our intention to stop for a few minutes and introduce ourselves to the Mir of Nagir, but we were informed that he was away and so we did not linger.

Most of the roads over which we were traveling ranged from 7,000 to 15,000 feet above sea level. But those distant Hunzan trails looked to be 1,000 or 2,000 feet higher.

The obvious reason why they switched over to the Nagir side is because by dint of hard work and hewing at the rocks, they managed to hack out a road that was partially "jeepable." From what I could gather the old Hunza road, in places, was barely "crawlable" on hands and knees. So the reason was obvious why our guide took us along the south bank on the Nagir side.

Every time we passed anyone on the road there was the usual greeting of "Saalam" or "Saalam aleikum" and of course, the greetings were always returned by us.

By now we were getting more or less used to the lay

of the land and didn't have any great discomfort or suffering.

I began to feel that I could recognize and tell a Hunza citizen from a Nagir citizen. Maybe it's not so and I'm just imagining this—but I thought that the folks from Hunza looked to be cleaner and better dressed than the ragamuffins from Nagir that passed. But whether they were from Hunza or Nagir they always greeted us pleasantly and acted in a most friendly manner. There was no cause to have any concern about the peaceful intent and the good-naturedness of the people.

Our guide knew every Hunzan and in most cases he would stop and chat with them for a minute or two. As a matter of fact, strange to relate, I think every one we met was either a cousin, an "in-law" or some other sort of relative. Whether these relationships were true or false, I was never able to determine, but they did all seem to be friendly and intimate with him and I see no reason why he would say they were related if it were not true!

This was our third long day of travel and while I truly loved every inch of the way, I was finding the going mighty hard. I enjoy walking in any territory or weather but here the continual climbs, the rough rock-strewn paths and sharp ascents were playing havoc with my breathing system. I was perfectly all right and even comfortable as long as I could proceed at my own gait . . . and my gait was a good one. But on the climbs at that altitude I just couldn't take more than 50 good paces without stopping for a breath. Every time I'd stop the guide would wait for me and I could see by the expression on his face that he was thinking, "Hurry up! Come on, slowpoke—get moving, lazybones!" It was O.K. for him . . . he was young and used to it.

Akbar left us at Secunderabad where he crossed the bridge into Hunza territory. His home was half a dozen miles along the river on the north side—a place called Hindi.

He had mooched most of our cigarettes. We made the mistake—at least, Cec did—of giving both him and Sherin a package each shortly after we met them. I gave him a small neat pocket English dictionary that I had and which I always carried with me. On top of this, Cec had given him 10 rupees and I had given him 50 more. In both cases he had asked for more money on the pretext of buying food or paying someone or other, which I knew was a lot of "hokum." But we needed their assistance and with Cec's doubtful condition, we were in no position to resist demands for money.

Crazy enough, he didn't hoard the cigarettes. Neither did Sherin. Whenever they met someone on the trail, which was often, they treated them to a cigarette, so, in the course of a day they would distribute at least a package or even two. Therefore, on the last day when Akbar was leaving and he asked us for some more cigarettes, we just had to tell him that we didn't have them.

Cec is the smoker. I light one cigarette in the evening when I can relax. But I carry a few packages on my travels so that I can give them to someone who might appreciate them. I have found that a package of cigarettes is often more appreciated than money and have had many favors and kindnesses bestowed upon me because I had a package of cigarettes to pass along.

It was obvious to me now that Akbar and Sherin were in cahoots and that they were home on leave together and when the Mir instructed him to guide us to Hunza, Sherin had immediately planned to have

Akbar join up with him when we had crossed the Gilgit River and were well on our way.

Akbar was by far the shrewder and the more forward of the two soldiers, although he was apparently much younger. He appeared to be about 20 or 21, whereas Sherin, I imagine, was at least 5 years older. It was clear to me that Akbar was the kingpin.

After Cec had given Akbar 10 rupees to procure some food when he reached the rest house in Nomal, Akbar evidently saw that it was easy to get money from strangers traveling so far away from home. Therefore, when I arrived later, he came to me and told me about needing some food and supplies. Not knowing Cec had already given him 10 rupees, I gave him another 10.

That evening, before we went to bed, he suggested that I give Sherin 10 rupees. I saw and felt the squeeze right there and then and as I handed Sherin the 10 rupees, he declined it in a half-hearted manner and said that the Mir would never allow him to take money from his guests. I made no attempt to persuade him but Akbar suggested that he take it. As he put the 10 rupees in his pocket, he asked me in a solemn voice to please not tell the Mir.

Well, I kept my promise and I didn't tell the Mir but I wanted to on more than one occasion so that he might know that at least two of his trusted guides were mulcting his guests and visitors for all they could get.

By the time Akbar left us at Secunderabad the two of them had taken us for over 100 rupees and 10 packets of cigarettes. Before we started to give them the money that they demanded, I had in mind that when I reached home I would send them gifts of various items that they mentioned en route. I had

intended to send them both Dacron trousers and shirts, a good pocket knife each and I had a few other things on a list. But I found them so greedy, I stroked everything off and sent them nothing, whereas, to the other friends, whose generosity was genuine and sincere, I have dispatched package after package and still intend to send more.

So the 100 rupees or so that they did get from us was certainly a poor trade for the many valuable things that I intended to and would have sent them had they not shown their greed so clearly. Actually, I was more resentful of their actions than was Cec. I even had a mind to mention the matter to the Mir but Cec felt otherwise. "They were very helpful to us in our time of need," he said.

"You're right, Cec," I replied, "they did do everything we asked of them."

"Further," Cec continued, "we were, at one or two stages, practically at their complete mercy."

"Again I'll have to agree that you're right," I replied. "Therefore I have to deduce that they are honest and fine fellows, although a bit greedy!"

"That is not uncommon among human beings," Cec rejoined. "I don't think we have too much cause to complain about them. They've got the 100 rupees and the cigarettes and a few other things . . . and good luck to them!"

According to the standards of money and wages paid thereabouts, 100 rupees was mighty high earnings for their efforts. You can easily judge if I tell you that you can hire a horse—that is, a rideable one—and a bearer for the sum of 6 rupees per day which means about $1.20.

Now as we were nearing the end of the trail, I could see that Sherin was anxious to get on and he wanted

me to go as fast as possible.

We were now reaching a comparatively high altitude —11,000 to 12,000 feet. I could tell by the way I was breathing. I was suffering no discomfort whatsoever except when I tried to climb too much at one time. Even then, after a rest of 5 or 10 minutes, I was as good as new again.

At this stage we seemed to be traveling around in a circle and I knew we were climbing a mountain in a more or less circuitous fashion, doing a ledge at a time. I also realized quite fully that we'd have to come down, too, because there was a bridge at a lower level which we had to cross to get into Hunza.

Seldom, if ever, did we pass a nullah or a channel where water was flowing without brim-filling ourselves with that cold, tasty nectar. Actually it was tasty . . . and by that I mean that it wasn't insipid like water that has had one or more treatments with fluorine or chlorine.

We'd been traveling a couple of miles through the dry heat without having passed a place where we could get a drink, when we met some people going in the opposite direction who were sucking what appeared to me to be chunks of ice. When the first of these people passed us, I didn't pay much attention, for some unknown reason. But when the next group passed and they were also busy sucking away on these titbits, I wondered what was up . . . and I didn't have too long to wait before I found out.

As usual, I was trailing and I could see that up ahead my party had stopped and when I got there, the reason was quite apparent. In front of us stretched a mass of ice and snow. Our guides and bearers were busy discussing the situation when we noticed some other travelers from the other side cautiously feeling

their way across this ice and snow obstruction.

We stood and waited. When they climbed down from the mass of ice, our guides inquired from them concerning conditions over the icy trail and whether or not it was safe. I could see by their gesticulations and stamping that we were supposed to watch where we were going and that there were traps or soft spots.

Then I tried to patch up the pieces that had produced this scene and it appeared that we were at the mouth of one of the larger nullahs that was fed by a glacier further up on the slope of the mountain. Due to the heat of the past few days a massive chunk of the glacier had broken off and had glided down, shutting off the mouth of the nullah and completely covering the trail. I would judge that the piece was about a quarter of a mile wide and couldn't tell how far back it reached because it blended in with the upper reaches of the mountain.

Our guides suggested that they would climb up and go ahead and see if all was well and then come back and tell us. But I said that wouldn't be necessary. If these other people had crossed it, then we should be able to make it, too. So, beasts and men scrambled up the side of the glacier and we worked our way across.

A huge mass of this glacier hung over the side of the road, leaving a clear drop of 1,000 or so feet beneath us. We tried to keep away from this overhanging lip, but unfortunately we were unable to do so completely, because there were gaping holes in the ice mass on the other side of our soggy trail and we had to avoid them, too. Our bearers seemed to be very much concerned about our safety and welfare, so they walked slowly ahead and insisted that we follow in their footsteps.

We were only 10 or 15 minutes crossing this frozen

mass. The horses and the donkey didn't seem to be a bit perturbed and I thought to myself, "If they're not worried, why should I be worried?"

Nevertheless, I was jubilant when we crossed it safely and were once more on terra firma—even if it was 10,000 feet up!

At various points along the route we could get marvelous glimpses of Rakaposhi and in some spots I felt that I could just run over to the edge and touch the beautiful massive, sky-scratching pinnacle. I'm almost sure we saw Rakaposhi constantly in one guise or another from the time we left Nomal.

I could identify it by what I called its rudder-shaped peak. As we curved and wound around the various hills and mountains I thought that I had seen Rakaposhi from every conceivable side. But no matter when I saw it, it was a sight worth beholding. It is said to be the only mountain peak that rises sheer out of cultivated fields to reach a towering height of 25,550 feet.

Our journey was a difficult one and we didn't have time enough to stop and say "Oh!" and "Ah!" and bend our knees and praise the beauty about us. But honestly, it was worth doing just that, even though time and circumstances didn't permit this pious duty.

Now we came to the village of Minapin, still on the Nagir side, and this Nagir village lies practically at the foot of Rakaposhi. Minapin really does not do credit to the majestic mountain. Everything about Rakaposhi is so gloriously beautiful and enchanting that the village is a terrible disappointment.

Even when we stopped at the rest house and Cec and I were seriously considering making a stop here for the night, we had doubts and misgivings. The chowkidor who came to meet us at Sherin's call

looked dirty, dull and sleepy. We asked if he could procure some eggs and fruit for us and even before Sherin relayed the translation, I knew by the way he shrugged his shoulders that he didn't have any. Then I decided that I didn't want any food that this dirty old man would handle, anyway. So I looked at Cec and Cec looked at me and we decided to go on.

As we turned our horses about, ready to go back down the path towards the road, the chowkidor laid a restraining hand on Sherin and a discussion began. I wondered what the devil was up. Then Sherin said, "He wants two rupees!"

"What the hell for?" I stormed.

"He say you come in and he come to give service and he must have two rupee pay."

"Tell him if he keeps insisting I'll give him a kick in the teeth."

But then common sense took hold of me and, with some anger, I reached in my pocket and pulled out a rupee, handed it to Sherin and I said, "Give this to him!"

The filthy old greedy chowkidor grabbed the rupee note, still mumbling or grumbling, and we went on our way.

A couple of weeks later, when I related this incident to the P.A. at Gilgit, he was furious and, the day following the relating of this story to the P.A., he informed me that another man was now installed in the chowkidor's position. He said they'd had other complaints about this man before, but this time he took action.

At this juncture the view of Rakaposhi became absolutely bewildering. Nowhere on God's green earth, or even on God's hard mountains, can one find mountain grandeur that matches the divine beauty found

right here around Minapin.

I have never been, particularly, a lover of mountain scenery. I always felt that mountains were mountains. I thought the view of Nanga Parbat was majestic. Well, Rakaposhi is probably 1,000 feet short of Nanga Parbat's height but it is, in my opinion, the most beautiful mountain in all the world.

We continued down the trail and on the opposite side of the river we could see the Hunza village of Hindi. That's where our volunteer guide lived, but he had crossed over some miles down at Secunderabad, where there was a bridge. From here one could also get a splendid view of the Minapin Glacier which feeds many of the nullahs that supply Nagir with water.

It must be remembered that none of the villages on either side of the river get their water directly from the river itself, because invariably the river is hundreds or thousands of feet below. So they have to train or harness the water from the glaciers to supply them with their needs for irrigation and general use.

As we came in sight of Murtazabad on the Hunza side with its shelves and patches of green and gold, we passed what I thought must be a quarry for I could see millstones—some broken, some chipped and others apparently in good condition—leaning against the rock walls of the path. It didn't require any special observance on my part to realize that this was where the millers came to cut their millstones. They cut and prepare their stone right on this location and then, when they have it ready, they stick a large stout pole through the hole and roll and carry it to their mill or other destination.

I found out that this was the town of Meicher and its counterpart on the Hunzan side of the river was Hindi. The same vein of rock formation ran across the

river . . . or it would be better to say that the river had cut through this strath, creating a supply of this type of granite in both Nagir and Hunza. Wheat grinding mills were found in all villages. In fact, most villages had more than one.

Further along the route the road runs along a sheer cliff and one unconsciously hugs the mountain side of the road. All along the entire route we traversed, boulders, rocks and debris that had fallen down the slopes cluttered our path and the horses' speed was slowed to a crawl.

My mount was nearing the stage where he was useless, although, actually, he hadn't been of much use right from the beginning. I would only climb on his back when, between the heat and the climb, my legs were beginning to grow a little wobbly—nearing the true so-called "last leg" stage.

It was now midday and, of course, on this day the same as the rest of the journey, there was no stop for lunch. We didn't have any lunch. The only thing we had that was edible required hot water.

I wanted a little rest without stopping so I climbed aboard my horse and he dragged along. Then the blanket that was covering the upper part of his neck slipped down somewhat and I beheld a huge sore wound, fully as large as a silver dollar and an inch or two deep. It was filled with flies and other insects which were feeding off the flesh. It was a good thing I had had no lunch. As it was, I was nauseated. I drew the reins and slid off his back and I knew I wouldn't get on again, come hell or high water! His owner took him in charge and led him on.

One of the incidents—or I should say continuing incidents—that bothered me no end was the habit that the owners of the animals had of beating the little don-

key. One owned him but both took turns at beating him and they never ceased beating him from the time we started at Gilgit till we reached the end of our journey—60-odd miles. They used every mode and means of torture they could lay their hands to. They would beat him across the back and legs with a stick. They'd slap his belly. They would pound his back with a rock. They would kick him, slap him, poke him and the worst torture of all they inflicted upon this poor little beast was to get a stick and jab it into his posterior. On some occasions when the owner of the donkey was more than simply annoyed and trying to get more speed out of him, he would actually jam a stick right into the poor little beast's anus. I felt like doing exactly the same to him and showed my displeasure in whatever way I could and even called him some uncomplimentary names, but he didn't understand me anyway . . . although I actually wish he had.

I told my guide on continued occasions to tell them to stop beating the poor little donkey. He conveyed the message but without any conviction. They paid no attention. They felt the beast was theirs and they could do with it as they pleased.

Yet that loyal, mistreated, beaten and badgered little animal carried our luggage all the way—bravely. And I never noticed him flag one minute. As a matter of fact, he was always ahead of the horses.

Why they insisted upon beating him I am unable to understand and what is stranger to relate, the little donkey didn't let on he knew anything about it.

On one occasion while passing over a most dangerous ledge that had been partly washed away, there was a gap with a narrow projection, on which to brace one's feet. Now the horse could get across because he could take long strides. A man could get

across because he could hold on to the ledge with his hands. The donkey got his forefeet on the little projection but there wasn't room for him to bring his hind feet forward and rest them on the same pinnacle. So he stopped dead. The bearers pulled him, beat him, slugged him, kicked him, yanked him—one had him by the head and was yanking his ears with all his might, the other had him by the tail. But he still wouldn't budge. He had all of our baggage on his back and I'm sure it weighed as much as or more than he did.

I saw the trouble but I didn't know how to explain to the men the predicament that the poor donkey was in.

Eventually, after 15 minutes of merciless torture to the beast, it dawned upon them what the trouble was and the solution was obvious. One of them held his head firmly and the two others got under the donkey and each lifted one leg in the air and placed it carefully on the pinnacle right next to his forefeet. There was the little donkey perched like a trained animal at a circus with all four feet on a pinnacle not more than a foot in diameter. As soon as this was done, he moved his front feet forward and he was across the dangerous brink. If the donkey hadn't been as alert as he was and as smart as he was and had followed the urgings of the owner and the others, he would have hurtled down the cliff and been killed—as well as destroyed our belongings. I salute the wise, brave little animal!

I kept stopping every now and then to take some photographs. When Cec took ill on the first day out I took charge of both cameras. We had one for color film and the other for black and white. Not knowing whether or not we might get some of these shots on the way back, I took no chances and kept shooting

wherever a scene presented itself and I could muster sufficient energy.

Cec was riding his horse, with the donkey and his owner leading the way. They were now at least a mile or two ahead of me, but I didn't care a damn! I had made up my mind that I wasn't going to hurry. If I had to climb, I was going to climb in my own sweet time and nothing—sweltering heat, hunger, the look of contempt in my guide's eyes or even my goal—would make me hurry. I was tired and I was fagged and footsore and close to being beaten but I was suffering no discomfort whatsoever, other than fatigue, and I wasn't going to jeopardize my health by going at a pace faster than my body could stand.

I only wish I had made this decision right from the first day. Then I would have enjoyed the trip even more—if that is possible.

So on we plodded and I stopped for a rest wherever I saw a shady spot (which wasn't very often) or when I was climbing and my pounding heart told me in unmistakable terms that I had done enough for the time being.

CHAPTER 25

Karakorum Trails

Now We Were passing Murtazabad. There was nothing impressive or outstanding about the village itself, but in and around Murtazabad are some of the most spectacular gorges and precipices to be found in the entire area. There you will find a precipice that falls sharply more than 2,000 feet right into the river. Everywhere the depths, the heights, the valleys were of such immensity that it couldn't all be absorbed if you had a thousand eyes.

Actually the best view of the entire Hunza Valley is to be had from the vicinity of Murtazabad. From here one could also see the top of the Ultar Glacier which is the main source of water, supplying the principal conduit.

Now I began to conjure up dreams of the Mir's jeep being able to get down to Hasanabad and I pictured them waiting there for me and how I would walk

across the bridge and climb into the waiting vehicle and in comfort and relaxation be driven to the Mir's palace.

I was awakened to reality by Sherin who had waited for me to tell me the good news that we had only two miles to go to Hasanabad. This cheered me up and made me feel much better, even though I had long realized and accepted the fact that distance, time and space meant nothing to these people and that they could not be relied upon even to a slight degree to be accurate. But I wanted to believe that there was only two miles to go because I was mighty close to exhaustion. We had kept up a strong fast pace right from Chalt which we had left at almost 5 o'clock in the morning.

From the road at the top of the mountain I could at last see the bridge at Hasanabad! I breathed a sigh of relief and bespoke a prayer and lifted my eyes heavenward in gratitude.

The climbs had been the steepest I had yet encountered and my horse was absolutely useless. I had given him up five miles back. From the time we left Gilgit three days ago I had only ridden him about one-third of the way.

You don't know how glad I was when I saw the bridge in the distance . . . for I felt that at last I was nearing my goal. Every hill I climbed I thought was the last one.

"Thank heaven that one is over with," I would say. "I don't think there will be any more."

I didn't realize that the bridge in the distance was over 3 miles away and not 100 feet of level land lay between.

I got so I couldn't take more than 50 paces without stopping to rest. We were up now around 12,000 feet and, while it was late afternoon, the sun was still

burning hot. There was nothing to absorb the heat—no trees, no grass, just hard, flinty rocks.

Sherin was walking ahead of me and whenever I stopped on a grade or atop it, he would stand, recline or sit and wait for me. I could tell by the look on his face that he wished I would hurry along because he wanted to get to his home which was in Kerimabad, but he held his tongue. I wasn't the least bit concerned as to whether he got home now or 2 or 3 hours later—or even tomorrow. I was interested, at the moment, about me reaching my destination . . . alive!

You see, a short time back when I had stopped, with pounding heart, to rest for just a few minutes after what was to me a hard climb, he tried to urge me on and he'd been doing this right from the time we started out from Gilgit. He'd say something like, "Ready? Come?"

Well, about 5 miles back I decided I'd had enough of that. My heart was beating like a gold beater's hammer and felt as though it was going to pop right out of my chest. I had had about as much as I could stand, so I turned to him and snarled, "Nobody's holding you back. Get going. Go on. I'll go when and if I'm damn well ready!"

I was in a bad way mentally and physically and was prone to anger. He knew by the look in my eyes that I meant exactly what I said. In fact, if I'd had a stick or had he been within reach of my fist, I'm quite sure I'd have struck him. Yet, if left alone and bothered by no one, I was all right.

He didn't dare leave me because he would have caught the devil from the Mir, but yet, I wished he would. He was of no use to me. He did nothing for me that I couldn't do for myself—or didn't do for myself. The only actual service he rendered was to act as

interpreter and get us a bit of food at the rest houses and make arrangements to provide us with a supply of hot water.

Without trying to make my little story sound dramatic, I want to state that if I had followed this guide's urgings, I would have been buried on the Hunza trail. I'm 52 years old, unaccustomed to altitudes and definitely not used to mountain climbing or even walking a great distance in the burning heat . . . and when I say burning, I mean burning! Maybe it is always cool in some mountains, but this is certainly not so in the Karakorums!

The terrain was hard, grim, tough, desperate . . . but, if taken slowly and at a pace in conformity with one's habits and conditions of health, there is nothing to it. Had I had sense enough right from the start to stop every hour for 10 minutes, I would at no time have had the least difficulty or discomfort. But stupidly we had allowed the guides to set the pace and that was sheer madness on our part. I didn't realize this until the end of the second day.

We'd come over tortuous passes at the worst time of the year. There wasn't one hundred yards of the entire road, covering about 68 miles, that was not washed out or in a catastrophic state of repair, making our travels difficult and dangerous, with the exception of the sand flats, and over these one had to work harder to lift one's feet out of the sand.

On the next descent, after sighting the bridge across the Hunza River, I realized how badly I had previously erred when I thought that I would soon cross the bridge because I saw the winding, rising and dropping road and realized that even now I still had at least a long 3 miles to go.

I felt miserable and depressed. Actually, I had no

cause for this feeling, but I had built up within myself the vision that soon I would meet the jeep and then we'd be at the Mir's residence and I'd have fun, pleasure and relaxation. Thus, when I saw that 3 miles of winding, undulating road stretching between me and the bridge, I realized that my haven was still a long way off. Then, I had been pushing myself too hard to reach my goal. Had I not pushed myself so hard I would not have been so tired or uncomfortable.

My friend Cec who was riding, and his bearer and the donkey were at least a mile and a half ahead of me. To add to my troubles I was stopping every now and then to get some shots with my camera . . . and there were some beautiful things worth photographing. I just couldn't afford to miss them, no matter how lousy I felt. To make that even worse, I still carried both cameras and this, too, slowed me down considerably and added to my misery.

The view, the scenery, the colors that lay before and around me made the most magnificent panoramic mountain picture on earth. Unfortunately I was in no condition, mentally or physically, to appreciate it but I did have enough common sense and spirit left to snap a few shots.

Oh, what a sight when at last the Hasanabad Bridge crossing over the river into Hunza hove into view . . . and this time directly, not via half a dozen intervening mountains, ledges, twists, turns and writhing paths. This time I was sure there were no booby traps in between and through my weariness I allowed a smile to spread itself widely over my dust-covered somber face.

The bridge was a solid steel cable and wood affair of the floating type, fitted between huge rock outcroppings on both sides and a few hundred feet below stewed the fomenting Hunza River.

When I crossed the span and reached the other side, my heart sang, even though my body was tired and weary. My guide had told me that just around the bend the jeep would be waiting. I turned the corner with a joyful heart and what did I find? A nice steep incline! And to make it even better, it was strewn with boulders. There wasn't even the semblance of a path or road.

Over these rocks and boulders I couldn't even walk. There were many places where I had to actually creep and this tortuous road continued for almost a mile! It was a continuation of climbs with a few feet of flat trail before the start of the next ascent.

Suddenly I heard a shout and, raising my head, I saw a figure running towards me down the steep hill. Heaven be praised!

I hate to admit it . . . but how can I deny it? 'Twas clear for all who were there to see! I hold a distinction of which I should perhaps be ashamed. But be it what it may, no visitor ever to grace the portals of Kerimabad ever entered in a more ignominious or ungraceful fashion than I . . . clambering like an animal, on all fours, over rocks and boulders.

Luckily, the road the lad was traveling, down the steep incline, was clear—no stones, no boulders, no rubble. He was a tall boy, neatly dressed and fresh and clean looking. Then he was by my side taking my arm and saying, "Welcome! I greet you on behalf of the Mir!" He turned out to be the Wazir Sajid Ullah Beg, a mature man with the agility, countenance and general appearance of a boy.

I was panting and sweating profusely. Yet, dog-tired and weary as I was, I felt better immediately.

We walked up the hill together, slowly, at my fatigued pace. At the top was a jeep and around it was

a large group of people. I don't know whether there were 50 or 150. I was then in no condition to be perceptive. But there was quite a large gathering of the citizenry of that area and standing there among them I recognized my young friend from Lahore. They were all there to greet the visitors.

Then I perceived, standing at one side away from the jeep and the crowd, my two bearers and their horses and the brave sturdy little donkey.

"Would you come with me and assist in interpreting for me while I pay off my two men from Gilgit?" I asked the young man who had welcomed me.

"Of course," he answered with a smile. "I'd be delighted to be of service."

By now some of my fatigue had left me but I still wasn't running on all cylinders. I took out my pad and pencil which I continually carried in my shirt pocket and I started figuring out how much I owed them at so much per mile per animal. The closest I could come was 65 rupees. I handed the taller and older of the boys (for that is really what they were) 75 rupees and then turning to my interpreter, I said, "Tell them that the horse I was supposed to be riding was of little or no use. In fact, he was no good. And they know full well I have been unable to ride him at all since Minapin. Therefore, I should not be charged for him. Please impress upon them that I have no other complaint and ask them if they are satisfied."

He turned to them and spoke in Urdu for a minute or two. Then big happy smiles appeared on their dirty faces and they replied to him and bowed to me.

"They are very pleased and they ask me to say they are grateful."

With that I shook hands with both of them and waved good-by. Then I headed for a seat in the jeep.

CHAPTER 26

A Royal Welcome

How Happy I Was to see Jahangir's handsome, beaming and smiling face! This was the first time I had met someone I had seen before on my trip since I left home and you can hardly believe just how much that means and how good it makes you feel. Sure, I only met him in Gilgit but I had spent many hours in his company there. But when I saw him here at Kerimabad, it gave me almost a nostalgic feeling of home.

He was nattily attired in his best Western dress and my, he did look handsome. He was just two years older than my youngest son and seeing him in his finery brought with it thoughts of home. He reminded me very much of my own son back in Canada.

Then Jahangir introduced me to another young man who was standing beside him. He was Dr. Mohammed Yusuf Khan.

I did notice how fresh and clean everybody around

me seemed to look and I knew what a heck of a sorry mess I was in. However, I was too tired and weary and beat to know very much. My legs were buckling and all I wanted to do was get into that jeep. I'm sure Jahangir and the doctor both wondered what the devil was wrong with me or why I was so boorish, because I hardly recall even returning their warm greetings.

When I got to the jeep I was introduced to the Mir's three sons—his oldest son, Prince Ghazanfar Ali Khan, who was 14 years old; then Amin Khan, who was 13; and the youngest son, Abbas, who was but 8 years old. They were all handsome, pleasant looking children.

The luggage had already been loaded on the jeep, the three Mir's sons were in, the driver was at his wheel and I climbed and wormed my way in. I could barely find a spot to put my feet and sit down. Cec was asleep.

The moment I rested my rear on the seat I felt better. I was so happy, so glad, so relieved to take the load off my feet!

If you are accustomed to riding in jeeps or know anything about them, you will quickly gather that this was quite a load. They're not as big, as roomy or as accommodating as the ordinary motorcar.

Then the jeep started off along the road towards the palace at Baltit. It seems that this road has been in existence for about 3 years and the piece from the outskirts of Kerimabad to the capital, Baltit, which is about 4 miles, was not damaged by the storms and landslides that wrecked the road in other places. As it ran through a piece of the valley and not up against the side of a mountain, it did not share the same fate as the roads elsewhere in Hunza.

Before I confuse my readers with this business of

Kerimabad and Baltit, I'd better explain what I eventually found to be the situation. Baltit is the original site of the old Baltit Fort and it consists of a promontory or an actual high rock on which the fort was built. Now the Mir's new palace is built somewhere between one and one-half and two miles from the old fort and 'twere as though the Kerimabad-Baltit area was a long narrow rectangle with the old Baltit Fort at one corner, the Mir's palace at the other corner of the width of the rectangle. Between the two stretches the polo grounds and a roadway which, southward, leads to the rest of Kerimabad and, northward, to Altit. The Kerimabad area encompasses a distance of about 4 miles in length and about one and one-half miles in width.

In some places the road was wide enough to allow the jeep to pass comfortably with a little margin of a foot or so on each side. At other spots there was just room for both wheels to get over without much leeway . . . and in some places there just wasn't any margin!

The driver knew his business and with the responsibility of the Mir's three sons with him and two guests, he didn't treat the matter lightly. While I thought he drove much too fast for the terrain over which he was traveling, by the look on his face, I was sure he knew what he was doing and felt that he was driving at the proper speed for the conditions he had to surmount.

The road led through all parts of the town—it seems almost right through people's kitchens and yards. And within ten minutes we were driving into the courtyard of the Mir's palace.

As the jeep stopped I saw the Mir coming down the long staircase and there was no problem in recognizing him because he looked exactly like the photographs I'd seen of him. With outstretched arms and a beaming, pleasant smile he welcomed us to Hunza like long lost

brothers. He couldn't have been more friendly or gracious. He expressed genuine joy and pleasure in seeing us and then hurriedly added, "I'm very sorry to hear that Mr. Brunton took ill on the trail. I hope he is better now."

I learned later that it was the Mir's way to keep informed about all things that occur along the trail leading to Hunza that concern him. Therefore, the moment Cec arrived in Nomal riding with Akbar behind and holding him, the telephone wires got busy and the Mir knew all about it. He even knew with a fair degree of accuracy when we arrived in Chalt and, without a shadow of doubt, he probably knew within the half hour when we would reach the jeep.

It isn't hard to figure out how it is done. Many people passed us along the trail at one place or another and strangers from the West, believe me, are most uncommon. Therefore, as soon as they reached the village they would tell that they had met someone on the road. As we were the only people being expected at that time and our gait was being calculated, I am quite sure the Mir had our timetable accurately chronicled along the entire way. I also strongly suspect that it was someone known to the Mir who called the Kashmir office to find out if our permit was there. No, I am not insinuating that this was done in a sly or underhanded manner, nor that there was any intrigue or mystery attached to it.

I give the Mir credit for being a most intelligent man. We had been corresponding for almost a year before I reached there and he knew practically step by step what my intentions were. Therefore, it would be a matter of common sense and common courtesy if he did inquire along the line, so he would know when I might be expected to reach Gilgit. I'm not suggesting

that it was the Mir. In fact, I never even asked him about it when I was in Baltit, but it could have been, as I have related.

I regard the Mir as one of the finest, the most gracious men that I have ever met and I wouldn't do anything to offend him, no matter what. But I am just relating the thought that came into my mind after learning how closely the Mir checks up on what goes on about him. He's a mighty wise man and he needs to be because his little kingdom sits atop a proverbial powder keg.

Now Cec spoke up for himself and said, "I am much better than I was, but I'm not very well yet."

"I will have the doctor come up immediately to look after you," said the Mir. "He's a splendid, capable man."

"Yes," said Cec, "I had the pleasure of meeting him and talking to him for a few moments while I was waiting for Jack to catch up to me and I'll be very glad to have him pay me a professional visit."

With that the Mir ushered us into his palace, up the long staircase and into a most pleasant, comfortable, attractive sitting room.

As you enter this room, on the right is a semicircular wall with about two feet of wainscoting and from there on up, all glass. Along the wainscoting were placed luxurious padded seats, just like a couch. From this window was a grand view of Kerimabad, old Baltit Fort and all of the surrounding country that could be seen from a southern exposure.

Other comfortable chairs were placed at more or less strategic points throughout the room and in the center was a good sized table and there were little tables for drinks, titbits, tea and such. All told, the layout of this room was pleasing, convenient and ingenious.

"I'm sure you'd like to tidy up for a few minutes first, wouldn't you?" asked the Mir.

"You're so right . . . and thoughtful, too. We are grateful!" I said meaningfully.

He then led us through a large elegantly decorated trophy room into a huge richly carpeted and tapestried bed chamber and from there into a bathroom. It was obviously the bathroom that belonged to the Mir's and Rani's bed chamber.

I wish I had taken time to look about the room more carefully. I am sure it would be worth describing. From the short glance I took I can tell you it's one of those bedrooms that a man is most reluctant to leave. I'm sure if I had one like it, I'd spend far too much time in and about the bed.

The bathroom accommodations were modern in every detail. Every convenience imaginable was available. Seldom, if ever—yes, I'm sure never—before in my life have I seen such trappings, paraphernalia and comforts in a bathroom. It was true Oriental splendor. Hundreds of toiletries were within arm's reach . . . laid out neatly on dressers.

We just took a few minutes to tidy up and make ourselves more or less presentable and then we joined the group in the outer sitting room. I don't know what to call this room but it was one of the most comfortable rooms I've ever been in.

The Mir introduced us to the Rani, his wife. Her beauty was truly stunning! I can't describe her attire but it seemed to be a combination of native and Western style dress. She was not veiled—for which I am truly grateful. It would have been a shame to have covered that beautiful, charming face!

I was genuinely happy that she had decided (or the Mir had decided for her) to come out of "purdah"

just a few years ago. This means she no longer wore the veil or the coverings over her fine face and figure and she was no longer forbidden to meet men outside of her own household.

Then the Mir introduced us to his uncle, Shah Khan, who was a young man—much younger than the Mir —and Major Minza who was a guest. He was in the area, having been on loan from the Pakistan government, as liaison officer to a Swiss expedition that was working on the Nagir side.

Before we had a chance to even sit down, heavy steps sounded on the stairs and in a moment in paraded 4 big men. The Mir said, "I'd like to introduce to you 4 of my old friends, Dr. Berger, Dr. Neureuther, Mr. Klamert and Mr. Bogner. They are the leaders of the German expedition that is camped on the Nagir side—making an assault on Dumani!" (The natives usually say "Dumani" for every high peak.)

"Yes," one of them echoed, "and we failed . . . with only 250 meters to go to the top!"

"Are you going to try it again?" I asked, while we were still standing.

"No, not this time," he said. (The Mir motioned for us to be seated.) "We're going to do some reconnoitering about for a few more days and see what we can learn."

All four German leaders spoke excellent English. One of them, a German doctor of languages, who, in my humble opinion, spoke splendid English, still felt that his English was not good enough. He kept asking one of his companions, Dr. Neureuther who evidently spoke or knew more English, to interpret for him. I assured the good doctor that he needed no one to translate. Most any foreigner in creation would have been proud and happy to speak English as well as he did.

But I could understand his view. After all, he was a language master and wanted to know what I said precisely and when he spoke, he wanted his words to be translated precisely.

"Let's hear more about your attempt on the unattainable summit," I suggested. "Why the decision to abandon the scaling?"

"It is exceptionally difficult and dangerous. We must first find out more about the area," replied the dark bearded member of the quartet. He was a handsome, powerful looking man and he looked a lot like Ernest Hemmingway appeared when he was young.

"No, we are not going to make another attempt on Diran," he went on. "We've had enough for one go. If we did, I'm afraid we'd be endangering the lives of some of our men.

"It turned out that our last surge forward might have resulted in a minor tragedy or calamity. In our eagerness we probably underestimated the elements. They turned upon us fiercely and we are very lucky that we escaped without loss of a life. The howling winds and driving snow completely obliterated our path and it was almost impossible to know where we were going. We made it back to our base—but no more risks this time!"

The Mir asked me what I would drink and I was amazed to find that you could be served with anything your heart desired . . . your choice of the finest liqueurs or whiskeys, a selection of wines and champagne, German beer which the four friends had brought and, of course, soft drinks of any flavor, and tea or coffee.

I decided on a bottle of that German beer. It looked refreshingly good and it was a big bottle, too—quart size. To add the final touch, the Mir brought it to me himself in a large schooner with a handle on it.

With our drinks, bowls of nuts were served just the way we would be accustomed to them in America. Someone—undoubtedly the Mir—had the foresight to have them heated and they were delicious! They were a mixture of peanuts, cashews, pistachios and such.

My big moment had now arrived! We had just got ourselves nicely placed and introduced when I got up and presented the Mir with the transoceanic portable radio that I had been guarding for almost 10,000 miles.

His handsome countenance beamed delightedly as I presented the gift. Then he thanked me and said, "It was very kind of you to bring this for me. If you will tell me how much I owe you for it, I will pay you immediately."

I replied, "Sir, that is a gift that I proudly present to you."

"But, no!" he said. "I requested it and therefore I must pay for it."

"Sir," I replied, "you will pay me nothing! I am proud and happy to present it to you!"

"But, no!" he insisted. "I cannot accept it. I must pay you!"

"Please," I said, "let us talk about other things and enjoy ourselves."

"Does anyone here know anything about transistor radios?" I asked.

"Sure," spoke up 3 voices promptly, "Dr. Neureuther has radio as his chief hobby."

Immediately he was pressed into service and he carefully took off the plastic covering that had shielded the radio and its contents against sun, water and heat, although only the sun gave it any concern on the entire journey. In less than two minutes the German professor was whirling the dials and music and sounds were springing up from every movement that he made with

the dials. It seemed to be bringing in every station that was on the air—no matter where. Then he found some pleasant music and left it there for a moment.

When I heard those sweet strains of music coming out of that little music box, I was genuinely elated. I felt that all my troubles—at least, in this instance—were justified.

Here we were—an unusual, strange group of men and boys—comfortably seated in a palace that was built on a prominence at 8500 feet, completely enclosed by mountains from 20,000 to 25,550 feet high. It has been called, and it undoubtedly is, the greatest concentration of mountains to be found anywhere on the earth's surface. Yet that small insignificant-appearing bit of equipment was bringing in news, views and music from all parts of the world. And I could hear no static or interference of any kind. The music that was coming out at the moment, and tickling our ears, was as sweet and as pleasant as though an orchestra were playing in front of us.

There was no doubt about it . . . that little bit of apparatus was well worth the effort, the trouble and the worry I had in bringing it with me to this mountain vastness. You see, I carried it with me as part of my personal belongings. It had arrived from Chicago the day before I left on my journey and I received a special exemption from the government at Ottawa to allow me to bring it into Canada duty-free, because I had explained to them that I was carrying it with me to Hunza as a gift for the Mir.

So from Niagara to Toronto where I boarded the plane to Montreal . . . and before I boarded the plane at Montreal, I had to prove to the Customs Officer that I was taking it out of the country as agreed when they allowed me to bring it in free. The Customs Of-

ficer, taking no risks whatsoever, took the radio from me, gave it to the air lines official and told him to put it beside my seat on the plane . . . and it was there when I sat down in the seat allotted to me. I carried it off again at Paris, at Rome and at Karachi. There in Karachi the Customs Official gave me a scare for a moment, but then he passed me on with my precious radio.

I shielded, guarded and carefully watched it on the train from Karachi to Lahore and from Lahore to another change at Khanewal and then to Rawalpindi and again I took it with me on the plane from Rawalpindi to Gilgit. Even when our baggage failed to turn up at Gilgit and appeared lost, the radio was in my hands. I had no clothes or sleeping bag or any other necessity of life but I held on to the Mir's radio!

Then on the three-day painful, hazardous trek along the Hunza trail to Baltit the radio was carried wrapped in rags or shawl or scarf or something or other on the the back of one of the porters and I seldom took my eyes off it! Actually it had never been allowed out of the range of my vision since I left home.

While the excitement was in full swing and everyone was so interested in the performance of this radio, dinner was announced.

CHAPTER 27

Distinguished Company

I WAS INDEED flattered to be the guest of honor and the Mir asked me to lead the way. We passed through the long trophy room, as I called it, then turned to the left and entered the huge, beautifully tapestried living room. From there I was ushered to the right and stepped into a well-appointed dining room.

Before we repaired to the dining room Friend Cec had tendered his apologies to the Mir and taken off to our quarters and to bed.

The Rani sat at the head of the table. I sat at her left and the Mir sat beside me.

The dinner began with soup; then, there was a fish course, followed by curried rice and mutton; then, came another meat serving in the form of liver. There wasn't too much time for palaver and conversation . . . the waiters were passing around with food on trays or platters continuously.

I am incapable of describing the dinnerware. All that I can say, and this may be the simplest and easiest way to get around it, is that it was equal to the best types and kinds of chinaware or dinnerware that I have seen anywhere in my travels. It was obvious that the Mir or the Rani had made, through the years, excellent choices of the right types to use for their guests. Whether it was Chinese or English, I am not able to say but I wouldn't be a bit surprised if it actually were the better English type china because the English political agents through the years had all the finest accoutrements for entertaining in the home brought into them from dear old Blighty.

The Mir's servants kept plates of food passing continually about, so that everyone could have all of each course he could possibly consume. In fact, they kept pressing us to have more.

The servants were dressed in uniforms—white uniforms with a green border—and on their chests they wore the Mir's insignia of the lion rampant. They also wore sort of semiturban headpieces. The servants were clean, polite and thoroughly trained.

With dinner at 9 o'clock in the evening it would necessarily mean that one would have a fairly good appetite and everyone fell to it as though they hadn't eaten for a good long while. I'm sure most of us hadn't had as good or as sumptuous a meal as this in days and perhaps weeks. Therefore, there really wasn't too much conversation buzzing about.

For dessert there were English Oxheart Cherries. I recognized them, as they are quite easy to tell from any other variety because of the blush of red on one cheek and the pale yellow on the other and then their large size and their delicious goodness and sweetness. There were also apricots, plums and some small apples.

I could understand the apricots and cherries being on together but I couldn't quite figure out how they got apples and plums that early. I suspected they came from Gilgit way or at least some valley lower down where the season might be anywhere from a week to two weeks earlier. However, they still could have come from another part of Hunza.

All the guests were provided with what I thought were finger bowls. But they were used to dip your fruit in and wash it, although I couldn't see the necessity of washing it—it hadn't been sprayed!

I mentioned to the Mir and the guests that I was happy to see raw uncooked fruit served as a dessert. . . . "Because," I went on, "enzymes are essential for health and when foods are cooked, baked, fried, pasteurized or otherwise treated, the enzymes are killed."

The Mir listened to me carefully and for every subsequent meal there was either an uncooked salad, or fruit, or nuts. And from then on "enzymes" became a byword and the butt of many jokes. But even though they laughed and made quite a jest of the business of enzymes, the fact remains that it was inscribed upon their memories and they'll never forget what enzymes are.

Since I did recognize the cherry, I asked the Mir, "How come?" . . . because this, I felt was an anachronism in Hunza. I knew that cherries were distinctly a temperate zone fruit and therefore I couldn't quite visualize them being grown in Pakistan and India. But I forgot to reason that Hunza has a temperate climate, being so high in the mountains.

The Mir told me that these trees were planted for his grandfather by an Englishman who brought them with him from England.

Without doubt I enjoyed the cherries more than

anyone else present because I had left the lovely Niagara District just before the cherries came on and, as they are my favorite fruit, I genuinely missed the big feed of them that I usually had.

The Mir noticed that I was enjoying them and he pressed the huge bowl right before me and urged me to continue. He seemed to be enjoying the fact that I was eating them more than if he were eating them himself.

Judging by the fresh cherries that were gathered or picked from the Mir's trees in his own garden, I was quite sure that their season was almost identical with that of the Niagara District.

I began to ask the Mir questions concerning his cherries and his cherry trees and he answered openly and with candor. Actually, what he told me about the cherries and the cherry trees told me more about the Hunza climate and growing conditions than I could have learned in any other way.

"Do your cherries have a crop each and every year?" I asked.

"Every year since I can remember, these trees have borne big crops of excellent fruit similar to those which you are now eating," the Mir replied.

"Do you find many worms in your cherries?"

"Why?" he asked. "Have you found any or seen any?"

"No," I had to answer quickly, "but I'm just asking you if at times you do find worms in your cherries."

"The only time we have ever found a worm in a cherry," said the Mir, "is if one falls to the ground and is allowed to remain and rot there."

"That would be expected," I said smiling. "But I mean when you pick them from the trees, do you find any worms or insects in or around them?"

"I have never known insects on my cherries," he answered calmly.

What I was trying to ascertain was whether or not the fact that they were not sprayed had any effect on them. In the Niagara District, if you neglected to spray your cherry trees, each cherry would have a worm in it. What's more, I'm talking about the identical variety of cherries that I was eating here in Hunza which we commonly refer to as Napoleon Biggareau, Queen Anne or English Oxheart and from what I can gather, these three names are synonymous. There isn't any doubt about it whatsoever—they are the same cherry that is grown extensively in the Niagara District. I had a tree in my front yard in the town of Niagara for 20 years. It was an old tree—probably 100 years of age—and I had to eventually cut it down because of the infestation of worms and insects. I attribute this to the fact that, sprays being used for so many years, the balance of nature has been upset so that these worms appeared because they had no natural enemies.

Neither then nor since did I mention to the Mir why I was specifically interested in his cherry trees. Therefore, he had no motive, ulterior or otherwise, in withholding information, which I don't believe he would do anyway. But it does lend credence and strength to my own convictions on the subject.

The conversation began to pick up in animation and then the Mir suggested that we deploy to the living room where coffee or tea would be served.

I would at this stage like to give the names of all the guests at the Mir's table that evening. Excluding myself, I had found each individual someone either of importance, of high intellect or of rank.

There were three German professional men—a medical doctor, a professor of languages and a lawyer. The

fourth German was a businessman who made sport togs and ski outfits and therefore had a two-pronged interest in the mountain scaling expedition. Next was the Pakistani major who was assigned by the government to guide and work in liaison with the Swiss mountain climbing expedition. Then there was my young Pakistani friend, Jahangir Malik—student, journalist, adventure-seeker. There was the Mir's uncle who was one of the handsomest young men I'd ever met. He had a keen mind, a perfect flow and control of English and his grasp of science and scientific matters astounded me. I couldn't figure out how someone as young as he could have acquired so much knowledge and education so young in life. Beside Jahangir sat the doctor who was in charge of the hospital at Aliabad. There were also the Mir's three sons—then the Mir, and the Rani.

After dinner we retired to the living room. Ah, what a wonderful place in which to recline, sip black Turkish coffee or green tea, and smoke cigars or cigarettes if you chose. Now the exchange of ideas began to take place in earnest. I got involved with the black-bearded, handsome German lawyer on education. He was speaking, in glowing terms, of the superiority of the German or European system of education and telling all and sundry how superior it was over all other educational systems, including the American. My education was not come by in the United States, but since Canada is a part of America, I took this as a more or less personal affront and I quickly challenged that statement.

He was almost dazed at my effrontery. He could not believe his ears—so strong was his conviction that the German or European system of education was superior to any other. Usually I'm a fast talker—even at the expense of clarity. But this appeared to be too impor-

tant an occasion to be lost by jibber-jabber, so I spoke clearly, slowly and with distinct enunciation and said, "I am not in a position to speak of the merits of the European and American educational systems prior to 1918 which was the end of the first Great War. But since that time I have examined to a greater or lesser degree the educational systems in Germany, in England and other parts of Europe and have compared them to those in America. I say, and I'm willing to prove it, that the finest educational system in the world is now in vogue in the better universities of the United Sates and Canada. There are many universities of lesser importance in the United States whose degrees are not respected by the leading universities or even by other states of the Union, but universities like Harvard, Princeton, Columbia, Northwestern, McGill, Toronto, Queens and Edmonton are recognized and accepted, as far as I know, in practically any country in the world. And no university in Germany, Britain or any other country turns out better professional men!

"In Canada we have always respected the British system of education and regarded it as the finest. American and Canadian students and professional men were always encouraged to go to Britain to further their studies and do postgraduate work.

"I admit, too, that many American scholars have gone to Germany and Austria to obtain degrees in science, especially medicine. I also know of many musicians who go to Europe to study under the masters. But today America feels her educational system is on par with the best the world has to offer!"

There was more or less a silence after that and the subject of education was quickly dropped.

The Mir was sitting at my left and at my right was Dr. Berger, the language man. I liked him and the mo-

ment I learned he was studying Burushaski, as well as the customs and lore of the Hunza people, I was in like a duck and we engaged in a most animated, serious discussion. I shot the questions at him—he answered.

On his right sat the German medical doctor and occasionally Dr. Berger would turn to the doctor and ask him to translate some phrase that I had uttered in my questions. The German doctor had an almost perfect flow and control of the English language. Dr. Berger's English was quite all right, but he was so keen a student of languages that he didn't want to lose one minute detail. And his answers to my questions were always detailed, complete and in most cases gleaned from actual experience and personal knowledge. He had come to this area in May and was making a close study of the language, customs and people. He intended to remain in the Hunza vicinity for three months. He was attached to the German 1959 Karakorum Expedition as official linguist. Back home in his native city of *Munchen* he was a professor of Sanskrit. He's probably the best informed man on the Hunzan people, Hunzan language and the Hunzan customs to be found anywhere in the world today. There may be men from the outside world, who have spent more time in Hunza, but none who have had the understanding that Dr. Berger possesses nor the desire to learn, the ability to search and then the happy faculty of combining all of these.

When at last it came time to break up, most were loathe to do so, but the four German guests had to be off at 6 A.M. They had to get across the Hunza River and be back at their base camp at the foot of Rakaposhi in Nagir to perform their various duties. Diran, the mountain they were attempting to scale, is in this

vicinity. The people of Nagir refer to Diran incorrectly as Minapin Peak.

As we filed out of the sitting room and through the trophy room, the Mir showed me a huge chest and, opening the lid, I examined the treasure. It was filled with medicine—a gift from the German expedition to the Mir of Hunza. The Hunzan doctor stood there and examined it with me and said, "There are some things here that are precisely what I want and need for your friend, Mr. Brunton. They will work like magic. Mr. Brunton's troubles are over!"

The Mir pressed the medicine referred to in the doctor's hands and said, "Use it as you know best for my guest."

I went to tell Cecil the good news and as I started down the staircase, the Mir said, "Breakfast will be ready for you at whatever time you desire it. Good night!"

CHAPTER 28

Old Baltit Fort

SOME TIME BEFORE 6 o'clock in the morning a tray containing a huge pot of tea, cups, sugar and biscuits was brought into our room and placed on a table between our beds. The servant quietly departed.

Friend Cecil was feeling much better this morning and wanted to get up and about, but the doctor had ordered that he remain in bed.

So, sharp at 8 o'clock, after saying good morning and cheerio to Cecil, I trotted down the stairs. At the landing there was young Jahangir waiting for me. I had made a rendezvous with him for this time—the thought being that we should have breakfast together so as to give less trouble to the Mir or his household.

The doctor came up a moment later and said that he would go up and visit his patient and would meet us at the Mir's table.

Both the Mir and the Rani were expecting us and

after the usual greetings, he asked how Cec was doing.

"He seems to be quite a bit better today!"

"I'm awfully sorry he had to leave last night," said the Mir.

I didn't think he'd even noticed it—but he had.

"The doctor is up visiting him now," I told him. "He said he would join us in a few minutes."

"What does he usually have for breakfast?" the Mir asked me.

"Oatmeal, poached or soft boiled eggs, toast, jam and coffee would be wonderful if they are available."

"Not only is it available," said the Mir, "it is ready, for that is part of the breakfast we usually prepare for our guests. It will be taken up to him immediately."

A signal and a few words in Burushaski and Cecil's breakfast was well on its way up.

So we had breakfast in the dining room and chatted and I sought to make every moment count by asking questions that were vital to me . . . that is, questions about Hunza.

I am quite sure that the Rani understood most of the things that we talked about. She could not have been shamming as she looked both interested and charming while the conversation went on.

"I have arranged for an interpreter to accompany you on your trips and you can go wherever you like, providing you can get through and the roads are open," the Mir told us.

Shortly after, Sultan Ali appeared. He was the schoolmaster and also taught the Mir's children at home. He was to be our interpreter and guide. He was a slender, handsome young man. I'd judge his age as being in the early twenties. His command of English was very good. But I don't think his English was up to the standard spoken by the Mir, who spoke so fluently

that one would never believe that it was only a secondary language to him.

"You know," I said to the Mir, "one of the things that I wanted to see when I came to Hunza was a yak. I understand from my readings that yaks are used in this part of the country and I have been looking everywhere as I walked along the road to Baltit, but I have as yet seen no sign of a yak!"

"That is not hard to explain," the Mir said. "The yaks are further up in the mountains. They cannot stand the heat and we keep them in the higher altitudes where they can be comfortable. If they are brought to the lower altitudes, they suffer. They like to be up around 11,000 feet or higher."

"Well, then how can I get up to see them?" I asked. "I don't mind if I have to walk for a day or two, but see them I must!"

"I'll do better than that," said the Mir. "I will phone and have two yaks brought down as quickly as possible. They will have to come from Passu which is about 38 miles from here. I will have action taken at once and see that the yaks are provided."

(Does that not indicate to you the kind of man and host was the Mir of Hunza?)

I then took my leave of the Mir and the Rani and went out with Sultan Ali and Jahangir to look, see, pry and ask questions.

Our first jaunt was a good stiff climb to the old palace located about two miles from the Mir's new palace. As the crow would fly I'm sure it would not have been more than ¾ of a mile. But in order to get up there one has to wend and weave and climb slowly.

I was now becoming quite accustomed to the altitude. Kerimabad is up about 8500 feet and I am sure

that the old palace is up at least another 500 or 600 feet. It was perched precariously on a huge outcropping of rock that jutted straight up into the air and the entire surface of the pinnacle was used for the building. There was no superfluous area surrounding it.

I had a long list of questions prepared and I knew even before I started that Sultan Ali could not give me all the answers because many of the questions were strictly horticultural—others dealt with dietary principles. I wanted to talk to farmers and individual people and housewives on both of these subjects.

I asked if he could arrange to take me to a group of farmers or even an individual farmer . . . that is, farmers who were capable and efficient—the better, the more intelligent and prosperous ones . . . so that I might delve into their ways and means of field husbandry.

He nodded, "This will be done. When would you like to talk to them?"

"Tomorrow morning, if it can be done," I replied.

"That's fine. I will arrange it!"

Wherever it was possible, I wanted to get my information direct from the people concerned. There is actually only one class of people in Hunza and one occupation, which is farming. I only know of one shop in the area and it sells mostly goods that have been brought in by the Chinese caravans that have passed through. I don't doubt also that there were some goods in this same shop that came into Hunza via Rawalpindi and Gilgit.

However, it was plain and clear that 900 of the citizens of Hunza out of 1000 made their living by means of farming. Therefore, as I had come to Hunza primarily to study the farming and horticultural methods of the people, the preparation of the foods they ate,

and of course the kinds and varieties of foods that were used, I attached great importance to this phase of my trip and I was definitely determined that, come what might, this information I would have thoroughly and in detail.

No doubt it would have been an advantage had I been able to speak either Urdu, or better still Burushaski, so that I could frame my questions as I saw fit and have answers that would be direct and would not require translation. However, that was not possible. Still, I had no reason to believe that my interpreter would not be a forthright individual who would give me the answers that were relayed to him clearly and to the point.

Mind you, I was seeking no miracle or world panacea. I wanted to find out the simple truth!

Further, I wanted to walk from farm to farm . . . that is, just selecting one at random here and there. I wanted to view the farmer's activities, study his soil and examine it, ask a few questions and thus, I could gather the information that I wanted and which was so vital to me.

The old palace proved to be in a good state of preservation. I wondered, because of its good condition, why someone didn't live there. Many of the rooms were still furnished. There were even rugs and tapestries placed and hung in their original positions.

When we climbed to the top of the castle—that is, to the roof where I snapped many photos—it seemed mighty high and overlooked everything around us. But in the distance were mountains that were well over 20,000 feet—and that is no exaggeration, but more likely an understatement.

There was a railing around this upper balcony and from this balcony you could walk into other chambers.

These chambers were once living rooms and bedrooms. It reminded me of a penthouse. While it didn't have an elevator to whiz you upwards in a matter of seconds or the best in modern plumbing, it did have the air, the view, the history and fascination that no penthouse in creation could match.

Back about 400 years ago one of the rulers of Hunza married a daughter of the King of Baltistan who, as a gift to his daughter and her husband, dispatched 500 workmen from his country to Hunza to erect the Baltit Fort that we now know. The rulers of Hunza dwelt in that fort and made it their palace until recent times. The present Mir, too, when he took office after the death of his father, resided in this palace known as Baltit Fort.

The new palace, in which we were being wined, dined and entertained, had been completed recently and was taken possession of by the present Mir about 7 years ago. Actually though, the new palace was started by the Mir's grandfather back as far as 1925.

While we were guests at the palace, extensive masonry work was in progress as the Mir was having a broad, low, stone-walled veranda erected. This, I understand, would be used, on completion, as his court, where the citizens of Hunza would come with their problems and where the Mir would preside in judgment.

However, this work in no way interfered with the normal functions of the household, for, even as the people of Hunza follow the custom of moving upstairs for the summer and downstairs for the winter, so did the Mir.

To me, however, old Baltit Fort was an edifice of distinction, charm and beauty and if I were in the Mir's place, I would never have abandoned it.

This massive old fortress, for that is what it was, was actually one of the places that had withstood the attacks of invaders for more than 400 years and remained impregnable. It has only once been in enemy hands since the day it was built and that was in 1891, when, after the Battle of Nilt, it was occupied by the British. Records further indicate that the British added no glory to their occupation at the time because of their indiscriminate looting of the treasures found in the palace. But the Mir, whether because of his friendship for the British or because of his desire to tell the truth, claimed that it was not the British who looted it, but the Dogra troops who were under British command.

Here I would like to quote from E. F. Knight's *Where Three Empires Meet:*

"This massive fortress, which has been for hundreds of years the secure stronghold of the robber kings, inviolate until this day, stands boldly out, set in the midst of a sublime landscape . . . Twigg, Boisragon and myself took up our quarters in the most comfortable chamber we could find, which we soon discovered to have been the apartment of the ladies belonging to the Thum's harem. ("Thum" is Burushaski for ruler, sovereign, king, chief, "Mir". Used especially of the hereditary rulers of the states of Hunza and Nagir.) It was surrounded by a low, broad, wooden divan, on which our bedding was laid. Pillars of carved wood rose from the edge of the divan to the carved beams of the roof, blackened by the smoke of ages. . . . A fire was lit in the open fireplace at one end of the floor, the smoke escaping through a square hole in the roof. Save for the Oriental pattern of the wooden carvings it was just a hall, I imagine, as King Canute might have lived in. . . . We enjoyed a delicious night's rest after our late fatigues.

"We were up betimes on December 23rd, and proceeded to rummage all the nooks and corners of the deserted palace. We had heard that the treasures of many a pillaged caravan . . . were stored here, so the search was an exciting one. The tribesmen had been informed that, provided they gave up their arms, their property would be respected by us. . . But the possessions of the fugitive Thum were declared to be forfeited, so we set to work to collect together all the valuables that were to be found in the place, individual looting being of course forbidden. . . . We were informed that the Thum had made all his preparations for flight long before his defeat at Nilt, and . . . had carried off the bulk of his wealth with him across the Hindoo Koosh. . . . Still, they had not taken all, and we raked together a curious and miscellaneous collection of odds and ends scattered about and secreted away in the various chambers and cellars."

On two sides this mighty fortress (and it is a mighty fortress for that part of the world) is protected by abysses.

As the views of the mountains and the surrounding country from the balconies were unrivaled, I took many colored photographs and with each click of the shutter I hoped for the best.

I noticed a marvelous old firing piece, gun or matchlock. I don't know how to describe these things as I am not very familiar with firearms. However, I found out that this was a genuine treasure and was almost as old as the fort itself.

It was a most unusual firing piece. By actual measurement it was 6 feet long, elegantly and extravagantly decorated with silver and gold, and bore the inscription "946 A.H."

What had evidently been an old calendar portray-

ing an excellent likeness of Queen Victoria in full color hung on the old palace wall. It was still in good condition and told you to use "Mellins Food for Infants and Invalids." I suspect this picture calendar has been hanging there for some 60 years (it was dated 1899). Both the producer of the calendar and the food people could well be proud of the record.

One could easily spend a few days in and around the fort and probably write a volume about its history. But I'll leave that for someone else.

I made a careful round of all the rooms in the old palace and by that time Sultan Ali remarked that we'd best be retracing our steps to the Mir's because the Mir had asked him to bring me back in time for lunch, which was at 1.30. So we started our descent.

CHAPTER 29

Hunzan Crafts and Skills

THE NEXT MORNING Jahangir came to our quarters just as I was ready to leave for breakfast. Cec again remained in bed on the doctor's advice.

The Mir was waiting for us in his bright, pleasant sun room when we entered and with him was another handsome, beaming man whom he introduced as his brother, Ayesh, who had just returned from a trip up country.

It is customary for the Mir's oldest brother to remain unmarried and act as an advisor, assistant, secretary or whatever else this position might be termed. He also acted as the Mir's emissary and was the engineer of the electric light outfit in operation at the palace.

We were then ushered into the dining room for breakfast. The Mir, Ayesh and the Rani seated themselves just to keep us company and of course add delight and conversation while we breakfasted.

"You understand," he said, "that the reason I do not have breakfast with you is due entirely to the fact that I must rise at 3:30 every morning to perform my religious duties . . . and 'tis then I have my morning meal."

"Thank you most sincerely for your explanation. It is most important to me so I may better understand the ways of your people and yourself."

Then the Mir went on, "I have received word that two yaks are being brought down from Passu and should arrive at Altit some time during the night and will be there tomorrow morning."

Then I said to the Mir, "Would it be all right if I walked to Altit and rode one of the yaks back here to your palace?"

"That's exactly what I had in mind for you," said the Mir.

"Well, seeing there are two yaks coming down, as you mentioned, and my friend Cec is confined to his quarters by the doctor, I'll take Jahangir along and he'll ride the other yak back."

"Fine, fine!" said the Mir.

Then the conversation continued and the Mir said, "I have another brother and I certainly hope you will have an opportunity to meet him. He is serving in the Pakistan army—as a captain. I expect him back within the next 3 or 4 days and you will enjoy meeting him, I know. He is a most likable and interesting man. I hope he gets here before you decide to leave."

"I'd be very happy to meet him and I, too, hope he arrives before we depart."

"We call him Salat," he said. "That means moustache in our language. He has one of those handlebar moustaches and he's a big man—bigger than either Ayesh or I. His proper name is Capt. Jamshed Khan."

Ayesh was a most jovial character. He had the most pleasant smiling happy countenance of any man I've ever met. He was always either laughing or smiling and every time I looked at him I had to smile as well. He was a handsome man but in contrast to the Mir, who had a good head of dark hair, Ayesh was balding, the same as I.

It was most pleasant to see the splendid cordial relationship that existed between him and the Mir's entire family.

"How are you coming along with your quest for information?" asked the Mir.

"Exceptionally well, sir," I replied. "But there are also many questions that only you can answer and I'm hoping that you can spare a few minutes some time within the next few days in private so that I may gain this information."

"Any time you say," replied the Mir pleasantly. "I'm at your disposal. You mention the time and that will be it."

"You are indeed very kind to grant me this great favor and I appreciate it," I said.

So there and then we made an appointment for 5 o'clock the following day.

Every meal at the Mir's was a joy and a delight and both the Mir and the Rani were always present. I had already mentioned to him that this was a trouble and an imposition and too much to expect of him. But he said that it was the way he wanted it and that nothing was too good and no effort too great for his guests. Well, what can you do with a man like that?

Then he informed me concerning my friend's health. "The doctor has things under control now," he told me, "but he will remain here with me as my guest at the palace during your stay so there will be no worries

or cares in regard to Mr. Brunton's condition. The doctor will attend to his duties at Aliabad and look after the hospital there . . . but he only has one or two patients and he will be back and forth from the hospital to the palace. Therefore he will be in constant touch with your friend."

"No man could do more," I assured the Mir. "I don't know how we can ever thank you enough."

"Don't mention it," he said. "You have been very kind, too."

"Now is there anything that you would like me to get for you while you're here? I wish you would tell me because some things may take a few days to procure or prepare and I would like to have them ready for you."

"I'll tell you what I would like and you tell me what you would like me to send you from Canada—and no holds barred." I said to him.

"Fair enough! We'll tell each other frankly what we want."

"Agreed," I joyfuly replied.

I always carry a notebook with me. It's a small folding affair made of leatherette or something, that has room for 3 or 4 ball point pens and a pad inside. I was making notes as well as marking down the things the Mir expressed interest in when I spoke of the conveniences available in America. I intended to send these to him anyway.

I had seen quite a few little items around Hunza that I would have liked to have . . . for instance, a Hunzan hat, a cane made in Hunza, a pair of Hunzan boots. The boots are most unusual, being something like the mukluks used in the north by the Eskimos, except that these are made in a simpler manner. They are somewhat like riding boots in shape except they are

made entirely of soft pliable leather, the lower part, including the soles, from yak hide and the upper part from cow or ibex hide.

I wanted to learn as much as possible about the good people of Hunza. Therefore I was interested in their crafts and craftsmanship.

All of the cloth used in making the garments the people wear and the special Hunzan hats are woven on looms that have been in use for hundreds of years. They weave 3 distinct types of material. It takes about 3 days to weave a length of approximately 15 yards of the best cloth, which is hardly sufficient to make a man's and a woman's "choga." The woman's requires 7 yards and the man's takes 9 yards. They trade commodities in exchange for the weaving. Then, during the winter, the men of the households cut and stitch the garments into durable, warm clothing.

The village blacksmith is also the music maker. Somehow, to me, that seems most appropriate for the clang of the hammer on the anvil rings a true music. These blacksmiths and musicians live in a section entirely of their own and they seem to keep mostly to themselves. It seems that all of the blacksmith-musicians of Hunza belong to a tribe known as the Bericho.

These people were sent to Hunza long, long ago by the Prince of Baltistan who was repaying a favor rendered him by the Mir of Hunza. These people have retained their independence and identity and do not generally take part in Hunzan activities. They even speak a language of their own known as Dumaki. This is also referred to as the speech of the Doma, or Bericho, of Hunza.

These people dwell in a quaint village or a community entirely of their own located just below Baltit. The history, the behavior and the manners and occupa-

tion of these unusual people stirred up an interest within me, and I wanted to know more about them. I found very little data could be obtained from any of the books I had been able to read on the subject.

But after much discourse and questioning, I learned what I had begun to suspect . . . that the Bericho were actually gypsies who had come to India more than 2,000 years ago. From India, as good gypsies would do, they fanned out to spread themselves in small groups over the entire country . . . some ultimately settling in Baltistan, from whence a colony were sent off to Hunza.

Their place of abode is actually a village known as Berishal. It is a known fact that the people of Hunza depend entirely upon the Bericho for their iron-mongering and their tool-smithing and their music-making.

I was very happy to have unearthed this information so I can pass it along to my readers.

These Berichos used to send their children out of Hunza to be educated and the Mir told me that he had to put a stop to this practice . . . not because he objected to the children of the Bericho being educated, but because the children did not return or remain with the trade of their parents. As the Mir's country needed artisans of this type, he had to put a stop to their sending their children elsewhere for education.

The Mir went on to tell me how important these Berichos were to the community. They fashioned farm implements as well as hardware like hinges, latches, razors and many other essential farm and household necessities that are fashioned from metal. Besides making the implements of peace, the blacksmith could also fashion a shotgun barrel.

He further mentioned that each household in the community pays a small tithe as a contribution to-

wards the maintenance of the Berichos and they travel about the villages mending and repairing items requiring attention, and, of course, providing music and entertainment wherever it is required. I guess they could be compared to the traveling tinkers of Ireland.

The Bericho blacksmith shop contained all the accoutrements found in the blacksmith shops of America. There was a pit in which charcoal was laid and kept alive and glowing by a pair of goatskin bellows . . . the customer usually wielded the bellows while his implement was being manufactured or repaired. There were many necessary tools—hammers of various sizes and tongs and, of course, a large chunk of some old machine that served as an anvil.

Then there was the goldsmith. He didn't fashion much out of gold any more because there wasn't much gold. Some time ago there was a quantity of gold washed from the Chalt and Hunza Rivers. This was done at times when the rivers had receded to a low ebb and then the sand left on what was the river bottom a few weeks or months previous was washed for signs of gold. The people who collected or panned or mined this gold were called "marooh."

This Hunzan goldsmith also made silver trinkets, rings, bracelets, medallions, pendants, ear rings, broaches and other articles of the craft. What's more, they were set with attractive colored stones, for the mountains around Hunza abound with many beautiful and valuable stones. As the women of Hunza do love and wear jewelry, the goldsmith was kept quite busy.

Yes, there was a wood turner in the area, too. Whether or not his craft has improved since the advent of John Clark, the American engineer who set up a wood carving school with his headquarters in the old Baltit Fort, I am unable to say. But from the work

that I have seen performed, I am not too sure that our wood workers could teach them any new tricks. The thing they're short of is suitable wood.

One of the important functions of the wood turner is to fashion bowls which are made out of either mulberry, willow or apricot wood. The wood turner also makes charpoys, chests, jewel boxes, bowls and chairs and I believe he is capable of making anything that can be fashioned out of wood.

One definite thing impressed me about these various craftsmen and that was the fact that time was meaningless. Their craft was the important thing. Whatever had to be done had to be done right whether it required an hour or a day or a week.

There were many things that I would have liked to purchase or arrange for but some of them would require days to produce and it was not my desire to hurry anybody. After seeing their pleasant way of life, I had no intention of disturbing it. Whatever was available that I wanted, I would take with me. Anything else could be sent on or else I would do without it.

CHAPTER 30

Who Are the Hunzans?

I HAVE HEARD the people of Hunza referred to as Hunzans, Hunzukuts, Hunzawals and Hunzas. They prefer to be called Hunzukuts.

However, in my writing I am referring to them as Hunzans. I do this strictly as a matter of simplification. I find it easy to say and easy to remember and I also believe it to be the most phonetical of all the terms given.

The Mir claims that the rulers of Hunza were and are direct descendants of Alexander the Great. I could find no proof to either confirm or refute this statement. But it is generally believed that not only the Mir, but the people of Hunza are descendants of Alexander or his soldiers.

It has been related by many writers that the Hunzans are not by appearance an Asian people. To that I will subscribe completely. They are definitely, in

countenance and color, not Indian but European.

If you took the first ten Hunzans that you met anywhere and put them in Europe, no one could doubt that they were Europeans. With the exception of a few clearly and unmistakably Chinese-appearing Hunzans, practically each one would pass as a European. It is understandable that a bit of Mongolian blood got mixed in because Hunza is right smack on the Chinese border.

The people of this country are unqualifiedly the most energetic and industrious of all the people I came across in the East, which lends credence to the fact that they are of European origin.

Even before I went to Hunza I read carefully Arrian's *Life of Alexander the Great.* After seeing Hunza and being impressed by the conviction that the people of Hunza did appear to be Europeans, I came back and made a further search through the *Life of Alexander the Great.*

It is an historical fact that Alexander took unto himself a wife when he was on his Indian campaign. He married Roxana, the daughter of Oxyartes who was king of Bactria. Bactria is in the northern part of Afghanistan—right smack against the Hunzan border.

Alexander had a posthumous son with Roxana. His name was Alexander Aegus.

So the Mir's claim might have sound historical basis. The Hunzans claim to trace their history back about 2,000 years. Well, Alexander married Roxana back in 327 B. C. So you see, the story may have its point.

I'll further state that the Mir himself looked exactly like one would expect a Mediterranean European to look. He might feign a relationship or descendancy from Alexander the Great, but he couldn't feign that Macedonian appearance.

History also relates most pointedly that Alexander had difficulty with his troops at various points in India where they refused to go any further. Then in Taxila, which is not very far from Rawalpindi on the route to Hunza, he left the sick, disabled and older men. It wouldn't be difficult to imagine that some of the younger wounded men, when they got well, crossed the Himalayas through the Babusar Pass and then wandered up to Gilgit and Hunza or when they were in Bactria, it would have been quite an easy matter—in fact, it was just a matter of walking a few miles through the mountains—to reach the Hunza River.

It is not in my interest to strengthen the Mir's story or the tales that other writers have established about the relationship of Alexander or his men and the people of Hunza. I am merely citing the above from my actual observations and studies. You can accept it or waive it aside.

One would not have a comprehensive understanding of Hunza and the people of Hunza without a few facts about their comparatively early history.

One of the most colorful leaders that the people of Hunza have ever had was the present Mir's grandfather—Sir Mohomed Nazim Khan, K.C.I.E. (Knight Commander of the Indian Empire)—who was the Mir of Hunza from 1892 until 1938 when he died on July 23 at the age of 79, having ruled for a total of 46 years. 'Twas a long rule for any king in any country.

In 1934 when he was 75 years of age his wife gave birth to a son who was named Sahib Khan. In January, 1938 the British crown conferred the title of K.C.S.I. (Knight Commander of the Star of India) upon Sir Mohomed.

He was followed by his son, Ghazan Khan who ruled from 1938 to 1945—not quite 8 years. Ghazan Khan

was then succeeded by his son, the present ruler—Mohammed Jamal Khan who has been the ruler of Hunza since 1945.

Here is a quotation from the Mir's grandfather's book in which he tells about the blood-curdling exploits of his brother, Sfdar Ali, whom he succeeded:

"He thereupon had Taighoon, Nematulla and Misiab killed, Sakhawat Shah and Jahandar Shah rolled down a precipice below Ghulkin, their mother put to death and arranged for the murder of Salam Khan in Shimshal."

However, he spared the life of his brother, Nazim Khan and then he wrote to the Maharajah of Kashmir to announce his ascension to the throne in the following descriptive terms:

"By the will of Allah and a decree of fate, my late father and I recently fell out. I took the initiative and settled the matter, and have placed myself on the throne of my ancestors."

This bloodthirsty Mir virtually got away with mass murder and felt that he was cock of the walk and could afford to defy any power.

From my reading of the Mir's grandfather's autobiography, from studies made from the earlier books written about Hunza and from my observations and discussions on the spot, I have evolved a personal kind of understanding concerning the situation that prevails in Hunza today.

The Mir of Hunza, as well as the other rulers of the principalities in that area, such as Nagir, Punial, Yasin, Baltistan and others, are all Mohammedan and, from what I can gather, they supported or were willing participants in the revolt which tied them together with the central government in Pakistan. This government, bear in mind, is strictly Mohammedan and partition

from India was on this religious basis.

However, records clearly indicate that Hunza had for many years enjoyed a pleasant relationship and trade with her Chinese neighbors through the Province of Singkiang. History shows that for ages the caravans moved continually from Kashgar, Urumchi and Yarkand down through Hunza and on to Gilgit, Peshawar, Afghanistan, Persia and further westward.

Hunza in those days used a lot of rice, which came from China. Wheat has practically completely replaced rice.

If this gives rise to the impression that Hunza was not as self-sufficient as you imagined, I am sorry, but I am dealing with facts and not myths . . . unless they are so identified. I don't believe nor does data prove that, while caravans moved from Turkestan through Hunza, there was any great trade or barter between the people of Hunza and Turkestan.

But because of the regular movement of these caravans across Hunza territory, it is easy to comprehend that most of the things the Hunzans would use and require would come from China and there would be a strong Chinese or Turkic influence in the area. Upon checking closely into the records and history, I found that the Chinese district bordering Hunza was also principally Mohammedan in religion as are most of the Turkic peoples. Mir Nazim Khan states clearly in his autobiography that the Mir of Hunza had possession of vast acreages in China along the Yarkand River, on which roamed herds of yaks and other domestic beasts. (It wasn't China then as they had not yet claimed it.)

The Mirs of Hunza have for many years—in fact, from time immemorial—paid tribute to the Chinese government at Kashgar. From the records that I have been able to find, they paid tribute to Kashgar long

before the Chinese government took control of that region. (By that I mean, while it was still in the hands of what is known as the Turki.)

This quotation from the autobiography of Nazim Khan will serve to illustrate the point in question:

"Two years later Colonel Bruce came to Gilgit as temporary British Agent and he told me that the Government had decided that I might still pay my annual tribute to China. To this, however, I demurred as I pointed out to him that having relations with both was like sitting between two stools. He, however, retorted that if this was the case and one stool broke there was always the other to sit on and that no suspicion would attach to me as long as there were friendly relations between the British Government and the Emperor of China. He did make one stipulation, though, and that was that I should let the Political Agent in Gilgit see the letter that accompanied the toll, before it was despatched."

In turn, the Chinese sent a friendly troop of soldiers to Hunza every year with gifts for the Mir and rich, luxurious gifts they were!

Now this may sound very strange, almost ridiculous but nevertheless, it is absolutely true. And the reason is simple and easy to understand if you will but follow me. The road through Hunza was by far the shortest route to Gilgit, Rawalpindi, Peshawar, Kabul and Persia as well as Srinagar in Kashmir and other parts of India. Elsewhere along the route the caravans could travel with immunity and safety but in Hunza even the largest caravan—yes, even one protected by gun bearers or soldiers—could easily come to grief. All that would be required would be a few men hidden away in the upper reaches on the slopes to begin dropping stones or to start a landslide at a given moment.

As that entire 200 miles from the Chinese border to Nomal is composed chiefly of this type of terrain, unless a caravan had a guarantee of safe conduct, they just couldn't get through.

The Mir was the ruler of Hunza and he held full and complete control over his tribesmen. So what could be more natural and understandable than an annual payment of tribute to the Mir for safe conduct? I know for a fact that right up until the time when the Chinese Communists took over the Singkiang District, the Mir still received a share of the cargo carried by the caravans traveling through Hunza.

Therefore it is my conclusion that the ways, the habits and the mode of life of the people of Hunza were patterned more after the Chinese than the Indians. Further, I suspect that they did a lot more trading with the caravans that came through regularly than they ever did at Gilgit. In one instance the caravans came to them and in the other case they had to go down to Gilgit . . . anywhere from 40 to 200 or so miles away, through the tough mountain roads.

It was in November 1947, when Pakistan seized part of Kashmir from India by an armed revolt. The circumstances that brought about this event are worth recording and I believe you will have greater understanding of the people of Hunza and Pakistan if you know the story.

The Pakistanis claim that the Province of Kashmir should belong to Pakistan because the Indian government had agreed to allow all the predominantly Moslem districts to secede and become a part of the newly formed country of Pakistan. Therefore, Kashmir which is more than 90 per cent Moslem should be a part of the Mohammedan nation. Eventually, when partition took place, Kashmir was not permitted out of the fold

of India but was held in abeyance by her, not belonging to one or the other, yet under Indian control.

But in October of 1947, when the Maharajah of Kashmir who was Mohammedan suddenly decided to accede to the side of India because of pressure, threats or promises, word got down to Gilgit and there a few bold, Mohammedan officers and members of the Gilgit Scouts acted. They first approached two British officers who were still in the employ of the government . . . these officers obviously sympathized with their views.

Immediately these officers cut all communications by slicing the telegraph and telephone wires and placed the Governor of Gilgit, who was the Maharajah of Kashmir's representative, along with his few Hindu followers, under arrest.

The Indian government retaliated by bombing Gilgit. The P.A.'s house was hit by one of the bombs but only a small amount of damage was inflicted.

So since that day in November, 1947 the Gilgit area, including Hunza, Baltistan and other parts that were once part of the former Kashmir Province, is now part of Pakistan and forms the Gilgit Agency.

Considering the many casualties that occurred in other parts of Pakistan and India, the Gilgit episode is one that those in charge can be proud of because there were few if any casualties and the entire area seems to be happy under Pakistan authority.

Since 1947 the influence in Hunza has been mainly Pakistani. Whether the people of Hunza like it that way or not, I could not ascertain. I did not ask the Mir his opinion. To the best of my knowledge and belief, he is cooperating to the highest degree with the central government in Pakistan.

Actually, from the way the people of Hunza live,

I cannot see what difference it would make to them whether they were a part of the British Empire, India or Pakistan, or if they were independent. They receive little or nothing from the outside world and contribute little or nothing in return. They are content to leave the world alone if the world will but leave them alone. The law of "live and let live" seems to be the "Golden Rule" in Hunza. If only more peoples and nations throughout the world would follow this simple principle!

Why have the people of this tiny principality so fascinated the world? That is a question that I have sought to answer.

I believe it was Mrs. Lorimer's book *Language Hunting in the Karakorams* that first brought Hunza to the attention of many parts of the world. Then, too, Robert McCarrison mentioned the health of these people in his research writings. Other writers followed. J. I. Rodale in *The Healthy Hunzas* did a lot to focus attention on the people of Hunza. Then G. T. Wrench, Barbara Mons, Frank and Jean Shore, John Clark, Lowell Thomas, Jr., Owen Williams, Ian Stephens, Peter Fleming, Irene V. Unruh, Ben Ruhe and Dr. Allen Banik.

Here I would like to devote a few lines to the work of the above mentioned authors.

I still believe that the most accurate and detailed information about Hunza was given by Mrs. Lorimer.

Barbara Mons in her book *High Road to Hunza* gives a splendid account of the people. The only serious thing I found wrong with it was that there wasn't enough . . . her book left me hungry, eager and yearning for more information about these delightful people. I rank her work as the most concise, informative, pleasurable book on Hunza.

John Clark in his book *Hunza—The Lost Kingdom of the Himalayas* devoted himself chiefly to his wood carving project and left little or no time to say, examine or do anything about the important happenings in Hunza.

When Lowell Thomas, Jr., and his party were in Hunza, they were too busy with the excitement and work involved in filming the scenes for Cinerama to learn much about the country and its people.

In the *National Geographic* of January, 1960 appears the story by Tay and Lowell Thomas, Jr. Part of this story deals with their visit to Hunza. However, the *National Geographic* takes pains not to mention the date of the trip to Hunza, which was December, 1954.

Frankly, I never believed that a magazine of the repute or supposed repute of the *National Geographic* magazine would stoop to that level—to publish an article about 5 years old and allow its readers to assume that it was of recent vintage. I guess the *National Geographic* must have been hard up for an interesting Asiatic story, so it dug up that old one of the Thomases.

A very good book that dwells here and there on Hunza in passages and references is one by an Englishman by the name of Ian Stephens. His book is called *The Horned Moon.* It is well written and this man does know the people of India and Pakistan . . . having been a leading correspondent and executive of one of the English newspapers in that country for many years.

Irene V. Unruh was a German doctor who spent considerable time in Hunza. Her observations concerning the health of the people are most enlightening. She attributes their good health to their unsophisticated, simple way of life and also suggests that the glacial water they consume plays an important role.

Owen Williams, who wrote *First Over the Roof of the World,* was one of the first Americans to see Hunza, although he spent very little time there. He just passed through. Hunza happened to be on the itinerary of the expedition of which he was a member.

Ben Ruhe, a young newspaperman from Allentown, Pennsylvania, spent some time in Hunza and Nagir and his account, published in his home town newspaper (and elsewhere) represents some of the best written and presented facts, tales and fables about the people of this part of the world that I have read anywhere and it's a pity that Mr. Ruhe didn't do a book. Perhaps there is still time.

And last, there is Dr. Allen Banik's book, *Hunza Land.* Dr. Banik was sponsored by Art Linkletter to go to Hunza and he found a great many obstacles blocking his path but eventually, when he did get into Hunza, he unfortunately spent but a short time there and his observations do not correspond very closely with my own. But I salute his inalienable right to differ! Dr. Banik, a genial pleasant man, ready and willing to help anyone, has been busy addressing meetings and making appearances throughout the United States and from the reports that I have read, he seems to be pleasing his audiences.

Peter Fleming's book *News from Tartary,* while it is to be regretted that he devotes a scant 15 pages to Hunza, is probably one of the best pieces of writing on the country, the scenery and the people that you will encounter—no matter where you search. Also, his findings are pinpointed. Peter Fleming had a keen eye, a sharp mind, an understanding far beyond his years when he wrote *News from Tartary.* The references, written 25 years ago, are as sharp and as clearly in focus as if written today. I compliment Mr. Fleming

on a remarkable piece of reporting!

A splendid bit of writing about Hunza appears in the book called *After You, Marco Polo* by Jean Shore. Mrs. Shore is a remarkable traveler, a wide-eyed, eager observer and a writer with a fine sense of humor. Although only 36 pages of her book are devoted to Hunza, they are "must" reading for anyone who wants to have a clear picture of the Mir, the Rani and the ways of life and the people. Oh, yes, and her description of the country is a delight.

Now I must deal with two books that deal principally with the health of the people of Hunza. They are written by G. T. Wrench in 1938 and J. I. Rodale in 1948. If the health of the Hunzans is a myth, then these two gentlemen helped spread or perpetuate the myth. However, here is evidence that should dispel any thought of fancy.

Sir Robert McCarrison, C.I.E., M.A., M.D., D. Sc., L.L.D., F.R.C.P., B.A.O., spent the years 1902-4 as regimental medical officer in Chitral and 1904-11 as the Gilgit Agency surgeon. In that important office he had a splendid opportunity to study the health of the inhabitants of that area. Hunza is a part of the Gilgit Agency.

Dr. McCarrison reports: "During the period of my association with these people I never saw a case of asthenic dyspepsia, of gastric or duodenal ulcer, of appendicitis, of mucus colitis, of cancer. . . . Among these people the abdomen oversensitive to nerve impressions, to fatigue, anxiety, or cold was unknown. Indeed their buoyant abdominal health has, since my return to the West, provided a remarkable contrast with the dyspeptic and colonic lamentations of our highly civilized communities."

This lends credence to the outlines and hypothesis

concerning the health of the Hunzans. I have found the observations made by both authors, J. I. Rodale and G. T. Wrench, to be both authentic and comparatively reliable when it is taken into consideration that their work was done in the early years when not much information was available from Hunzaland. They were pioneers in the field to show the people of the world that there was a simple, natural, organic way to health.

Can anyone doubt that Hunza is located in one of the most inaccessible parts of the entire universe? The fact that a people—a handsome, virile, intelligent, civilized people—could live in such an inaccessible part of the world and still be considered among the healthiest of all people on the face of the globe is intriguing, to say the least.

Perhaps the story of their health, longevity and energy so shocked our concepts that we had to look twice or read twice to make sure that the statements we were reading could be accepted. Probably because of our smugness—with the feeling of security because of our modern medicines, our miracle drugs, our hospitals, our research techniques, our lab equipment and such—it was incomprehensible to us that a people so remotely located without all of these tremendous benefits could even exist, let alone be considered to be the healthiest and longest living people in the world.

Was it our disdain of eastern methods and way of life that rattled our concepts?

Now it could be that the dreamers among us had our imagination fired like it has never been fired before . . . to think that a people living truly on the roof of the world without benefits of modern civilization could subsist or exist, let alone be healthy!

But as one investigates, he finds that Hunza is one of the few places in the entire world, where there is a

people who retained their character, independence, freedom and primitive way of life. It is my belief that they are not much further advanced today than they were more than 2,000 years ago. Fearing that you may think I mean this in a derogatory manner, I would hurry and add that their way of life 2,000 years ago obviously was as good in many ways, or better, than our way of life today. But that is a measure for individual acceptance.

They owe their strength, their health, their longevity, their happiness to that wall of mountains that surrounds them and keeps out all but the boldest and most venturesome of invaders or travelers. They are surrounded by the most massive, the hugest, the greatest accumulation of mountain grandeur and awesomeness to be found anywhere on the world's surface. With such impenetrable guardians, it is not too difficult to understand the reason for their comparative privacy.

From what I saw and gathered, I found that one would not have to go many miles from any given point in Hunza to reach a location where no human being's foot had ever trod before. Should you have the desire to do just that, you can find millions of acres that have not felt the imprint of man within a few miles from most any given spot in Hunza.

Living in comparative isolation has made these people courageous and fearless. They are not stooges of civilization and all its implications. There, in Hunza, a man's individuality is still a characteristic trait to which they cling.

Now comes the big question—one that hundreds of people have already asked me . . . people who have but a faint knowledge or have heard a bit of news about Hunza and have been interested and fascinated by the myths and fables circulated about her—can Hunza

survive despite the encroachment of modern civilization?

I go on record as saying, "Yes, she can survive but it will take good leadership, and the present ruling Mir —my friend, Mohammed Jamal Khan—is capable of this leadership, provided he is not interfered with by the powers that surround him or emanate from Karachi!"

The first detrimental factor that is crawling into Hunza at the present time, and has been for some years, is salt. Already numerous cases of goiter have appeared which did not exist before when they used their native salt.

Travel in Hunza is restricted. In fact, at the present time no foreigner is allowed into the state without a permit and that includes Pakistanis as well. As far as I know, my friend Cec Brunton and I were the last foreigners to enter Hunza. With the political situation as it is today, I doubt if anyone else will be permitted to enter the country until the situation changes.

The fact that China is at the present time encroaching upon India is a rather significant factor. I really can't appraise its implications because the disputed area by any calculation seems to be of little or no value. There are millions of such acres available throughout Tibet and the Himalayan cordillera as well as in the Karakorums. Therefore it must be just for aggrandizement that China is moving. If that is her aim and desire, then Hunza would be right up her alley.

Yet it is my firm belief that China will not bother Hunza. I know the Afghans have looked with longing eyes on that part of Pakistan for some years, but they have neither the arms nor the men to successfully invade the area, although with arms from Russia and a little prodding, things could get hot in that area. How-

ever, such a move, in my humble opinion, would be most ill-advised because the Pakistan government has splendid leadership, a good army and a mighty impregnable position in Gilgit. Undoubtedly Gilgit is the most accessible point in that entire area and Gilgit which belongs to Pakistan, is most capably staffed, manned and led.

Even as I write my tale, changes are occurring in Hunza. In a letter received from the doctor just before my book went to press, he told me that many diseases unknown in Hunza before are making their appearance—primarily because they are brought back by native Hunzans who go out to serve in the army or work in other parts of Pakistan and the area.

The population of Hunza is as great now as its land can foster and sustain. There is no reason to believe that the birth rate in Hunza will decrease and that means that more and more of the people of Hunza will have to seek a livelihood elsewhere. But they will keep returning and bringing with them the benefits of civilization. That, in my opinion, will be the undoing of that little paradise on earth.

Being blessed with the earth's most fabulous mountain scenery may also be the cause of Hunza's undoing. I've noticed that exploration parties and mountain climbers have been congregating in that area more and more. British, Swiss, German, Italian and Austrian expeditions have been in or are planning to go into the Karakorums to scale those hundred peaks over 20,000 feet high.

The magnetism of unscaled impregnable mountain summits becomes overpowering to many men. Why bother with the Pyrenees, the Alps, the Rockies or the Andes, when the Himalayas, the Karakorums and the Hindu Kush offer a much more taunting challenge?

And fortunately or unfortunately, little Hunza lies right in the center.

These expeditions often consist of 100 men or more. They bring with them huge supplies of western food and commodities. Besides, their pockets are usually bulging with foreign currency. I fear that these will combine to eventually destroy Hunza.

Sad as I am to think that this will happen, I am nevertheless happy that I was there to see it while it was still "Shangri-la."

CHAPTER 31

Breakfast Chitchat

THE MIR was a most tolerant and understanding host. I can't say for sure whether or not all his guests were treated as well as I, but I have no reason to believe otherwise.

Sometimes I would get down to breakfast alone at 8 o'clock in the morning. On other occasions there was Jahangir, sometimes Cec and on some occasions the doctor and the Mir's uncle and a few other individuals. I usually tried to get down at 8 o'clock . . . yet, there were occasions when I got down at 6 o'clock, if I had some adventure or specific project in view.

I remember this specific breakfast because the first thing I said to the Mir after I was seated at the table was, "I would judge that you were very fond of the Aga Khan."

You see, it wasn't very hard for me to judge this fact because our apartment was hung with pictures

of the Aga Khan and his wife in various poses and stages of his life. I had given some study to these photographs and many of them were inscribed in the hand of the Aga Khan with endearing terms to his friend, Jamal.

Our quarters were in the guest house—actually adjoining the palace but on a higher level. This building had been erected by the Mir's grandfather back in 1925. It was a well-built, handsome structure, firmly ensconced on a high rocky ledge of granite.

You walked down the Mir's long staircase from the sun room, then you walked up half a dozen or more stone steps, forward a few feet and then you climbed up a circular, enclosed wooden staircase to the guest quarters. These consisted of a large, comfortable sitting room with many easy chairs and a fine writing desk, a large bedroom with two comfortable beds and further on was the bathroom. Then to the right of the lovely sitting room was a balcony—spacious and inviting. From it you could view Rakaposhi and all its splendor and gorgeous loveliness.

The furniture all round was similar to that which you would find in the average better-class American homes. Photographs adorned the walls, among which were the photos of the old Aga Khan and his French wife.

When I mentioned the Aga Khan to the Mir, he waxed eloquent and his face beamed and he said, "Not only was I fond of him—not only did I love him—but we were close intimate friends. He was the most generous of men and especially to the people of Hunza. I revere his memory! He was a wonderful person. We really miss him since his passing. His ancestors came from Persia to India in 1834. In 1934, one hundred years later, to celebrate the jubilee of the founding of

his ancestors' dynasty in India, he donated what is now the Hunzan school system. The fact that the children of Hunza are given a good education, without any cost to them, is due entirely to the kindness and benevolence of that great man. He started and maintained the system and I trust that his son will continue in his father's footsteps."

That the school system of Hunza is working, I can attest.

From what I have been able to gather and learn, Hunza was one of the states of India that contributed to the coffers of the Aga Khan. There is some story, true or mythical, that each year all of his religious followers throughout the world gave him a gift of gold or platinum to the extent of his weight. Now I do know that some gold was mined in Hunza and probably that, too, was sent to the Aga Khan or added to the sum or weight sent from all of the countries and the millions of his followers to be his gift but, as far as I know, at the present time there is not much gold being mined in Hunza and nowhere did I see any sign of anything that could be used as a means of export to bring money into Hunza.

In the meantime I was enjoying my breakfast and between munching mouthfuls of food, I was asking the Mir some rather important questions.

"I read somewhere some time ago, that the revenues you obtain from the fines you levy upon people in Hunza who commit misdemeanors or break rules or laws are added to the coffers of your own estate."

The Mir thought this was a great joke and laughed heartily.

"To begin with," he said, "laws are seldom broken by my people. They are good people and they live peaceably and do not commit serious offenses. During

the past year the total collected from fines imposed by me upon the citizens of Hunza totaled less than 200 rupees. You know that my people do not have much money. There is no way or means of earning money—except by the few. We do not require money in order to live in Hunza. Further, the full amount that was collected in this manner was used in the maintenance of the irrigation system."

I waved my hand and said, "I only asked. I didn't think it was true, but I've read so many tales about Hunza in which ridiculous and fantastic statements are made without any justification or background."

"A few years ago," I went on, "two of the most influential and widely circulated magazines in the United States published an article by a famed and capable couple of writers—man and wife. I know they visited Hunza on two occasions because I saw their names in your guest book. Now the story they told and which both of these magazines published stated that it was a custom in Hunza for the mother-in-law to go and live with a newly married couple and remain with them on their honeymoon to teach them the ways of life. You explained that this was the reason why Hunzan marriages were so successful and there was seldom, if ever, a divorce.

"Before asking you to clarify this, I just want to tell you that I read this story and when I came to this specific part, I could hardly believe my eyes. But, as I have learned, there are many strange customs followed by different people throughout the world and of course, this could be absolutely true. But it certainly is strange and weird sounding to me anyway. So tell me, is that story true? Is it the custom of the people of Hunza to have the mother-in-law stay with the newly married couple during their honeymoon?"

"I said it as a joke," replied the Mir. "I had no knowledge that it would be so widely publicized and written and taken as a fact. I did not mean to mislead the writers you mentioned."

"Then it is not true!"

"No," replied the Mir, "I meant it only as a joke!"

There was no doubt in my mind that the Mir had a keen sense of humor. In fact, through all my talks and discussions with the Mir which were frequent, there was seldom a time when he would pass by an opportunity for a bit of witticism or to laugh and have a bit of fun. He was just about as pleasant a man as could be found anywhere. He was not only a great ruler but he had a sense of humor. It was too bad that the writers referred to took him seriously. Maybe it was one of their bad days.

"Do you grow poppies here?" I asked the Mir bluntly and more or less out of the clear blue sky. I put this question to the Mir for a most definite reason.

On a few occasions I saw what I believed to be a field of flowers waving in the distance. But I wasn't sure. Invariably these patches of color were a mile or many miles away. I wondered what they were but I never could get close enough to see them. They were always sighted at great distance from where the road lay.

You might ask why I didn't definitely, once and for all, set out across the field and find out. But remember, when you're in a more or less strange unusual territory, you just don't go off across the fields into someone else's private property.

All told, I doubt if I saw more than half a dozen of these patches of color during the full length of my travels. There might have been many more but I certainly didn't see them and I have an idea that if they

were there, they would have been noticed.

It is also possible that from a distance of one or two miles, one might confuse a field of alfalfa hay or barley or wheat and, with golden heads when ripe and the sun's rays striking them, what was grain might resemble flowers, but I think I am well enough versed in plant lore to be able to make the distinction.

I want my readers to bear in mind also that most of my traveling from Gilgit to Baltit was done on Nagir territory.

The reason these bits of color were most conspicuous was obviously because of the practically total absence of anything that resembled flowers—or a bit of brightness.

The Mir answered my question about the growing of poppies as follows, "Yes, some of our farmers are growing poppies but I am going to put a stop to it."

I waited for him to continue with keen interest.

"It appears," he went on, "that some of the people have begun to take to smoking opium . . . and fearing this insidious bad habit will take root, I'm going to ban the growing of this plant."

I did not mention it to him then or since, but somehow I had overheard (perhaps at one of the parties in Gilgit where a group of the roundabout notables had gathered) that opium had been drifting in from some locations and commanding fairly good prices. It also struck me that the Chinese border, being close at hand, might prove to be a very appropriate market for the produce that they would get from the poppy plants.

I did not ask if there were any restrictions against the producing of opium, apart from the fact that the Mir was going to ban it for protection of his people. I do not know whether anyone could prevent the Hunzans or the Nagirwals from growing these colorful

plants. Of one thing I was sure and that was that they weren't growing them for the beauty of the flowers.

Now in my strolls and walks about Hunza, I didn't get very far above Altit. Who knows? Maybe a large quantity of poppies are grown further along the river. But actually I doubt it very much.

Breakfast was now completed. I was eating alone, of course, in this instance. The Mir and Rani were just keeping me company. I thanked the Rani for her kindness, bowed to her and took my leave with the Mir.

CHAPTER 32

We Meet and Ride the Yaks

I BELIEVE that every human being has a favorite animal. It is generally accepted that many people like dogs, others like cats, some prefer horses. At this moment I am thinking about other beasts—let us say, the more or less rare or strange beasts. Some people are thrilled at the sight of a lion or tiger and others, a giraffe.

When I was a youngster I was always fascinated by a buffalo. Probably it was because I had read many stories about the adventures and derring-do of Buffalo Bill. But for many years now the yak has somehow intrigued me. Somewhere along the line I had made up my mind that this was the most useful animal on the face of the earth. It is conceded that practically every animal has its uses and fills a place in the natural scheme of things. But to me, a yak embodied all of the wonderful features of the most useful and most

needed animals in the world.

It is clearly and distinctly established that Tibet, for example, could never exist and people could never live in that part of the world if it weren't for the yaks and yaks are native only to that part of the world —yes, wild ones, I mean. That's where they were originally found and tamed. They still roam wild on some of the higher inaccessible elevations and plateaus in that part of the globe.

No one will attempt to deny that our cow is a most useful and practically essential animal. It gives milk from which we make butter, cheese and cream. We use the carcass for meat and the hide for shoes, baseballs and many other articles but, to the best of my knowledge and belief, the cow as it is today actually couldn't look after herself in the northern latitudes and pasture food must be provided.

Well, the yak does everything a cow does. Besides that, it is one of the finest beasts of burden. Then, too, it is the surest-footed animal to be found anywhere. It can, and often does, forage for its own food. It can live off practically nothing. It is suspected that it can find sustenance in a bit of grass or roots or even a bit of coarse, uninviting (to any other animal) herbage.

Like our cow, it takes to domestication readily. Both the Tibetans and the Hunzans use them to work their fields and flail their wheat, barley and other grains. From the wool on its back, belly and head comes the toughest of woven fabrics, from which is made the sturdiest of clothes for the people and tents for their homes. Wherever you see rope in Hunza, you can be sure that it was made from braided or woven yak hair. The hide is used for most everything . . . boots and shoes, of course, and water containers and skin boats, which are the means and mode of transportation across

and up and down the dangerous rivers. Yes, even the yak bones and horns are never wasted. Picks are fashioned from them. They even find their way into the walls of the homes of the people of Hunza, for they are lighter than stones.

Still I haven't yet mentioned what is generally accepted as the yak's most important contribution to the lives of the people in the highest mountain ranges in the world . . . and that is from the little green herbage they get, they give a good quantity of rich milk, from which is made the famous yak butter. Then last and perhaps even most important, it is butchered for its good quality, health-sustaining meat.

Even the yak tails are useful . . . as brooms or dusters . . . and many are shipped to the Western world and used as Santa Claus beards. And they do make the best Santa Claus beards of all. I know—I have a couple!

Now after you have had a chance to read these qualifications, perhaps you, too, will share my admiration and appreciation of the world's most useful animal.

I was up bright and early the morning I was to go to meet the yaks. Yes, it was just 6 o'clock when I was walking down the enclosed staircase towards the Mir's palace—leaving Cecil asleep, as he still had to remain in bed as the doctor had advised.

I met Jahangir coming from the other guest house and he joined me. We had agreed the previous night to be up at 6 but I never expected that it would work out right on the beam, as it happened in this instance.

So down we went along the stone staircases from one garden level to another until we reached the Mir's palace and then we began to climb up the long wooden staircase again.

As usual, the Mir was there to welcome us, along

with the Rani and his brother and, after the usual sumptuous breakfast, Sultan Ali joined us and the three of us—Jahangir, Sultan Ali and I—took off to Altit. As we left the Mir said, "I'll be waiting here for you and you'll ride the yaks right into the palace yard."

"You'll find the yaks very easy and comfortable to ride," continued the Mir. "What's more—you won't notice the ascents and descents!"

"You're kidding!" I rejoined.

"No, I'm not," he said. "It's true . . . just wait and you'll see!"

It was approximately a 2 mile jaunt to Altit and the terrain was very much like the terrain we had encountered all the way up from Gilgit—washouts, rock slides, boulders strewn all over the place. This all made walking difficult, at least for me.

Now I don't want you to get the idea that when these landslides or rock slides occur they are just left where they fall, because that is the furthest thing from the truth. Immediately after these things happen, crews are put on to get things straightened away. But when you take into consideration that each speck of work is done manually and that they do not have even a wheelbarrow, you can then understand that the job is a difficult one and one that is back-breaking and requires much time.

The only implements I saw them use on the roads were a sort of pinch-bar or wedge and a sledge hammer. You see, they don't have dynamite and when a huge boulder lands smack in the middle or at the side of the road and can't be pushed off, the only other course to follow is to break it into small pieces. Those are the ways and means here of getting rid of huge boulders.

Let it also be clearly understood that the Hunza

workers are good workers. They are not to be compared with the ordinary workers found throughout Pakistan and India. They do a day's work somewhat comparable to that done in the West. They are neither slouchers nor slackers.

All along the route there were groups of men working here and there. At this time of the year there were not too many employed or working on the roads and this is understandable. Every man in Hunza and Nagir must provide for the winter. Remember, there is, broadly speaking, no money and the only means he has of providing is by the work done with his own two hands.

The dried apricots and other fruits that he may put away, the wheat or the barley or the buckwheat that he stores in his house, the few roots that he puts into his root cellar are his means of sustenance until next spring. So you can readily understand that there is no great surplus of Hunzans or Nagiriwals during the months of July and August to do work on the roads and I know that the Hunza Road is not maintained by the State of Pakistan. Therefore there would be little or no money forthcoming and those who did work would probably be donating their time. Or perhaps their work would be somewhat similar to a type of taxation, although I dislike using that word when referring to or talking about the people of Hunza!

We were more than a sauntering hour reaching Altit. If you've got any ideas about easy walking in this land, you'd better forget them.

As is usual on the entire Hunza trail, with few exceptions, it was climbing or descending all the time. The few places where you were neither climbing nor going down, you were walking along the river bed. In midsummer when the glaciers are melting quickly you

often get a sudden heavy flow of water and these rivers get deeper and broader and flood the roads. But then later, when it gets a bit cooler or cloudy, the river recedes and the river bed is again used as a road.

The alternative for the river bed is to climb hundreds or thousands of feet up along a road cut in the rock of the mountain or where a ledge might have been formed. When it is impossible to walk along the river bed, and this occurs regularly, in some places you must climb a few thousand feet . . . that is the only way you can continue your journey.

No matter how difficult, how dangerous or treacherous a roadway may be, there are some people who must get across, who must make their journey at that time. It is true everywhere in the world.

Therefore, when traveling on such terrain, it is positively advisable to try to get there and do your traveling when the rivers are not in flood. You can see why the river bed is preferable.

Altit is the name of the town wherein is located the old Altit Fort which was built in the thirteenth century. I don't know whether or not the other members of the party will agree with me but I did think that Altit was an exceptionally clean, tidy and orderly town. It was one of the first villages in Hunza to be settled because the area consists of a wide level, arable stretch of land almost two miles wide from the mountain wall to the bank of the river and here the drop was sheer—straight down for a thousand feet or more.

Oh, yes, all Hunza villages are clean and orderly but somehow it struck me that Altit was better then most. Perhaps the Mir knew this and that is why he had his picnic bungalow built there. I am convinced that Altit was the most attractive village I found in the entire country.

As we wound along the trail and through the streets of the village, I kept looking around to see if I could spot the bit of meadow or field where the yaks would be grazing. I felt certain that if they were being tethered or kept somewhere that there would be some sort of grazing ground for them and I found I was right because, shortly, we came upon a bit of meadow surrounded by shrubs and trees. And sure enough, there were the yaks and the herders.

The first thing I noticed about them was that they seemed to be snorting like wild bulls. They breathe rather heavily and exhale sharply through their nostrils. The altitude at Altit was probably about the same as that of Baltit—between 8,000 and 9,000 feet—and that was much too near the level of the sea to suit the yaks who wanted it at least 11,000 feet. Undoubtedly that was the reason they were snorting and appeared somewhat uncomfortable.

I liked their rather shaggy, unkempt appearance. The woolly hair that grew around their head and on top of it, looked as though it had been curled. I didn't know whether that made them look ferocious or cute.

I took a keen liking to the strange looking beasts. But I'm not sure that they shared my feelings. At least, they didn't look as though they did.

I have read and been told that you can trust a yak implicitly on any trail. If it's safe and can be traversed, he'll make it. If there's any doubt, he'll be just as stubborn as any mule. Where the way or the road is extremely bad, he will refuse to go and only by brutal pounding and beating and dragging will he continue along the trail that he distrusts.

Through each yak's nose ran a rope—a good thick, heavy rope. This is used to guide or lead the yak, instead of a bridle and bit.

The yak is just about the same general build and also somewhat the same in appearance as a buffalo. It is considered to be, by zoologists, a distant relative of the American buffalo. In fact, when I first saw a yak, I thought it was a buffalo and in my mind's eye, I compared it to the buffalos that I had seen in our Canadian zoos or parks. However, yaks do not have that hump around the neck, and they seemed a bit smaller. They are quite shaggy and look wild and ferocious, which belies their actual temperament.

We did find, and I had heard this before, that yaks are very independent—probably the most independent of all domesticated beasts. You just don't take liberties with a yak. You treat him fair and square or he doesn't cooperate—at least not very well.

I walked around them and examined their shape and form and was especially interested in their broad backs. "Ah," I thought to myself, "that's the kind of an animal I want to ride—where I can sit on a flat surface instead of the apex of a triangle." My posterior was still smarting from the few miles I had ridden astride my horse. Even with the protection of the blanket, his backbone seemed to cut through like a razor. Right there and then I just had to get up on a yak's back and have someone take a picture.

"This should make a good caption," I thought to myself, "Jack on back of yak!"

The yak snorted a few times before and during the time I was getting on his back. But a few words and a jerk on his nostrils by his owner and he remained more or less orderly, but eyed me suspiciously.

Their broad well-filled backs and the sight of their feet with the sort of second set of hooves, fingers or spavins along the forelock told me that what the Mir had said about a comfortable even ride was true.

Many long years ago I learned not to doubt people but to accept what they say until proven incorrect . . . be patient and allow time to speak. I accepted what the Mir told me but I wondered just how that miracle could take place. Upon examining the yak's feet or hooves or whatever else you might call them, I learned how this wonder of wonders occurred and I'm going to describe it to you. It will be difficult and you'll have to follow me rather closely.

If you examined a yak's forelegs, about 8 inches up from the hoof on the inside are appendages that look like spavins or callouses. These obviously are auxiliary paws, cushions or hooves. Therefore, the yak could, when necessary, walk on these appendages. It can be best illustrated by having you put your fingers straight up resting on the table. Then by dropping your fingers flat and putting down your wrist, you immediately shorten your arm by at least 6 inches. The yak could walk on its hooves or on the spavins 8 inches up along the leg.

Jahangir had never ridden a yak either, so he got aboard one and I shot him a few times—that is, with the camera. He was quite pleased with himself, too, because that was something he hadn't anticipated when he started the journey.

Sultan Ali, our guide, said to me after I dismounted, "These men made quite a sacrifice in bringing the yaks down here from Passu. It's about 38 miles, you know, and they lose at least 2 or 3 days from work on their farms."

I knew quite clearly what he meant and I said, "Well, what do you think would be fair recompense for their efforts?"

"Well, about 40 rupees each."

Jahangir was standing besides me while this discus-

sion was taking place and he said to Sultan Ali, "That's much too much! Why most people in Hunza don't get that much in a year. I don't think you should ask Mr. Tobe to give them that much money."

Sultan Ali and Jahangir exchanged a few fairly warm words about this and the end result was that Sultan Ali compromised by saying that maybe 20 rupees each would be satisfactory. So I dug into my pocket-book and handed each of them two 10 rupee notes.

CHAPTER 33

The Mir's Summer Cottage

ALTIT FORT has quite a history. I believe it to be the most historic and most important edifice in all of Hunza. Records that have been handed down would indicate that the fort was about 700 years old and it was erected like a perch, right on a sharp bank of the Hunza River, on what was originally a sharp gigantic precipice.

It may be smaller and perhaps simpler in construction than the larger fort at Baltit, but I thought it was big enough after I walked all around it and went in and out of all its chambers. Then, too, it is much larger now than it was in those days because the present Mir had a new wing erected so that when he holds court and carries out the seed-sowing ceremony, there will be plenty of room for his family, guests and visitors.

I gained the impression that it was a tight little fortress—well built from blocks of rock, expertly

wedged together to form a formidable protection against invaders of their day.

'Tis for the Festival of the Bopfau, which is the Burushaski name given to the barley-seed-sowing festival, that the Mir comes dressed in all his regal finery and robes of state to practice a ritual that has been carried on for hundreds of years by the Mirs of Hunza.

It would appear this ceremony is a carry-over from that performed by the ancient Greeks and the people of Hunza like to emphasize this, as though forging another link in the chain of evidence that would tie them in as descendants of Alexander the Great.

On this occasion the Mir wears a magnificent gown with a wide belt fastened around his waist, in harmony with the gold brocade that bedecks the gown. At his side he carries the ceremonial sword in a carved ivory scabbard. He makes a most imposing, handsome figure with his head crowned with a clerical cap with flowing egret feathers held in place by a large golden pin. The Mir's brother, Ayesh, and the Mir's eldest son, the heir apparent, come similarly attired.

With an assembled crowd watching, the Mir drives a plough pulled by two oxen or a yak down and back along the field and into this furrow he sprinkles seed mixed with gold dust. The ceremony is repeated three times and then the Mir throws handfuls of the seed into the air. Fable has it that if anyone catches a grain of seed and takes it home and mixes it with his own seed, he will be assured of a fine harvest.

The seed-sowing ceremony is not only performed at Altit but in two other Hunzan villages so that the Hunzan farmers can come and catch a seed to insure themselves of plenty for the following year. By doing it in three different locations, it means that no Hunzan farmer will have to walk more than a few miles to

partake of the Mir's blessings.

In comparing the fort at Altit and the one at Baltit, I gained the impression that the one at Altit had more rooms . . . smaller ones they were, but there seemed to be more of them. The old fort at Baltit was much larger and more impressive. Yet somehow I became more attached to the Altit Fort. I had the impression that it was almost impregnable.

Then I recalled the true story of the capture of the fort by the British and, after appraising its isolation, strength and precipitous banks and sides, I thought to myself, "Any group of men who had the courage to attempt to scale and capture any fort in Hunza deserved a lot more glory and loot than they would ever get in Hunza . . . and that is for certain!"

On one of the balconies stood a man with a bowl of apricots and Sultan Ali said, "This man is the chowkidor, or guardian, of the fort and it is customary to give him a gift."

"Of what?" I asked.

"Oh, about 10 rupees," replied Sultan Ali.

Jahangir almost jumped a foot when he heard that and he said, "For what? He hasn't done anything and we haven't eaten any of his apricots."

"Well," Sultan Ali said, "it's just customary!"

"Customary or no," said Jahangir, "I think it's ridiculous!"

I turned to Sultan Ali and said, "Normally I'd be glad to give him the tip that you suggest, but the truth of the matter is my fund of Pakistan rupees is just about nonexistent. When we set out for Hunza from Pindi we calculated in advance approximately how many rupees we would need and then we added on 100 extra, and that's what we came with.

"From the stories that we read and from the infor-

mation that we could gather, we were under the impression that no money was used in Hunza. Therefore we didn't calculate on spending any. So far we have parted with approximately 300 rupees and to place the matter squarely in front of you, we don't have enough money to buy our plane tickets back from Gilgit to Rawalpindi! I'm hoping we'll be able to get some money at the bank in Gilgit because I did notice that there's a bank there, so I'm afraid I'll have to pass up the 10 rupees that I'm supposed to give the chowkidor of the fort. But tell him I enjoyed my visit to the fort very much anyway!"

While we were wandering around on the open balcony of the old fort, Sultan Ali pointed to a neat looking place down below, but not far distant, and said, "That is the Mir's picnic place, where he comes every Saturday evening with his family. He stays there Sunday and Monday, returning to the palace for his various duties Monday evening. This practice is followed during the summer months."

"Well," I replied, "that's a custom that's followed pretty well in the West and probably in most places around the world . . . where one tries to get away from the usual home conditions and seeks refuge in a cottage. We, generally speaking, call this our summer cottage. And you know what? Many folks and families travel hundreds of miles just for the weekend, just as long as they can get away from home and the sameness of living for a few days at a time!"

"I guess we've seen everything here at the old fort worth seeing. So let's go down and make for the Mir's picnic place," I said as I headed for the stairs.

It was a walk of but a few hundred yards and we were soon at the garden gate of the bungalow. Sultan Ali spoke in Burushaski to one of the chowkidors who

produced a key and opened the door.

Soon I was wandering through the well-appointed summer cottage. It was neat, tidy, clean and solidly built but of course it was not on par with the palace—nor would one expect it to be. After all, as mentioned, it was but a weekend spot and what we would call a summer cottage back home. Yet, of course, it was much nicer than the average summer cottage, but not as good as some of our elegant ones back home.

I was rather surprised and quite amused to note that the walls were covered rather widely with shiny lithographed pictures . . . yes, it was good printing or lithographing work. The pictures were obviously put out by the Chinese communist government and everywhere they showed workers and working girls with beaming faces, wearing good clothes and looking prosperous, but no one could doubt that these pictures were splendid specimens of communist propaganda.

One of the most effective pictures for propaganda purposes, I gathered, was one that showed the happy beaming faces of whites, yellows, blacks—all mixed and enjoying life together.

At first I thought that the Mir couldn't have known about these pictures hanging in his bungalow, but then I gathered that he must know about them. Evidently he doesn't fear them or worry about them. Perhaps he knows his people better than anyone else.

I do not have to go into a long discourse to prove to myself or to anyone else that the Mir does not have communistic leanings because communism would quickly and definitely stamp out any form of absolute rule like his Mirship. Yet I can also see the absolute necessity of the Mir keeping on friendly terms and not antagonizing either the Russian or the Chinese Communists. Then to make the situation even more hazard-

ous, the Russians have infiltrated Afghanistan. Therefore, Hunza is now completely hemmed in by what I would call the bamboo, the iron and the stone curtains.

I can't visualize where the Mir has too much to fear from Communist aggression. From what I have seen and learned, the Communists like their spots plush, soft and succulent. None of these conditions exist in Hunza!

The Communists like locations where they can eventually, if not immediately, take out more than they put in. That would never take place in Hunza. Then, too, people who have chosen to live on the north bank of the Hunza River would not be easily shackled or enslaved. Admittedly, the Mir is an absolute monarch but there are no signs of that type of rule in evidence anywhere in Hunza. There's a parallel in England. While England has a queen, a monarch whom the people respect and revere, whom they would follow in life and in death, the monarch would never make demands on her people.

I do not believe there is a more democratic nation on the face of the globe than Great Britain . . . and that includes the United States or other republics. I believe the same situation holds true in Hunza.

Another point to be considered by possible invaders is . . . What would they gain besides possible armed conflicts with Pakistan and perhaps India?

No, I would suggest that Hunza is comparatively safe from communist aggression and the Mir can afford to have the communist propaganda pictures on the walls of his summer bungalow in Altit as a gesture of friendship.

The yard or garden around the bungalow was aglow with flowers of every description and hue imaginable.

They were obviously of American or European origin . . . probably grown from seeds that someone had sent him. Plants like zinnias, snapdragons and asters were readily recognizable.

Then, I was very much surprised to see in front of the bungalow, of all things, a swimming pool . . . and the youth of the district were swimming and enjoying themselves to the fullest possible extent. They were shouting, laughing, splashing and cavorting about just as you would expect boys and girls to do in any swimming pool in America. They displayed the same reckless abandon, glee and happiness that our children do.

At this time I thought to myself that here was another mark of the Mir's bigness. He was allowing the children of the town to make full use of his personal family swimming pool. This was quite different from what most people expect of eastern potentates.

I'm not sure that this little incident impresses you but I assure you I was quite impressed by it. It added to my conviction that the people of Hunza were really free and democratic.

A little way off were our yaks and their guides. "Let's go," I said to Jahangir and Sultan Ali, making straight for the yaks. "The Mir and Cec will be waiting for us, so I guess we'd best be off."

I selected the larger of the two yaks because I'm quite a bit heavier, or almost twice as heavy as Jahangir. I was assisted on to the yak's back and the yak didn't seem to be too happy about it! For the first time since I'd been riding, which wasn't very long, I felt really comfortable. The well-padded broad back of the animal was delightful to sit on and, best of all, he had a western style saddle. I'm always afraid of falling off a horse with those English saddles because I've got nothing to hold on to except the reins and for my kind of

riding, I need more than that. Here I didn't have any reins but I could put my hands on the horn of the saddle. This was a case where I had the horn to hold onto and didn't need it. With those scrawny, skinny horses I could have used that appendage but I didn't have it.

This is also an excellent time to emphasize that a yak, whatever his sterling qualities, is by no means ever a speed demon . . . and that is for certain. He is built for comfort and security and my, oh, my, how important that is in the Karakorum or Himalayan terrain. The usual expected speed of a yak is approximately 9 miles per day which is somewhere around 1 mile per hour. However, I did not complain of the time that it took us to get from Altit to Baltit. I was having the time of my life and for once I wasn't the least bit afraid of falling off.

The road from Altit to Baltit actually is quite hilly —precipitous and steep in some places. But true to the Mir's prediction, I felt neither ascent nor descent because of the flexibility of the yak's legs.

Here I was 8,000 or 9,000 feet up in the firmament windingly wending my way around ledges and narrow trails while resting comfortably on the back of a yak. For the first time since leaving Gilgit I felt no fear or worry while riding. The beast on which I was sitting gave me a feeling of confidence.

The top of the final climb took us to the narrow opening of the valley. Here, if you turned right, the road led to the polo field and old Baltit Fort; if you turned left, to the Mir's courtyard.

I noticed what I thought to be a particularly unusual figure coming from the opposite direction, heading towards the pathway that led to the Mir's courtyard. He was in the company of another individual

whom I recognized as being a typical Hunzan. But the old fellow who caught my attention did so because he was so strange looking. He was slightly stooped, short of stature, looked very old, had a firm yet halting walk and a beard of bright henna red and wore a long brown coat that touched his boots. It didn't require intuition or even a keen mind to recognize that this man was not ordinary in any sense of the word and I remarked to Sultan Ali that this was someone with whom I would like to converse—by means of an interpreter, or course.

We headed the yaks over so we'd be directly in front of the two as they passed by, and Sultan Ali spoke to them. Then he turned to me with a smile and said, "You are quite right, there *is* something most unusual about this man. He says he's 105 years old today—it's his birthday—and he's come to pay his respects to the Mir."

I allowed myself to slide down off the beast's back as I asked Sultan Ali to introduce me to the fine old fellow and we shook hands. He said, "Salaam aleikum!" and I, too, said, "Salaam aleikum!"

I was really very happy and felt privileged to meet a grand old man like this!

I appraised him from head to foot, scrutinized every part of him—up, down, to the right, to the left—and I smiled as best I knew so as not to offend the fine old fellow. He was indeed a patriarchal old man, but he still looked in mighty fine fettle; he'd come from a little farm a few miles away, on foot!

The old man's name was Dado and he lived in Hasanabad. He has one son, two grandsons, three granddaughters and fifteen great-grandchildren. Dado has 10 close friends, all of whom are more than 95 years of age. Membership in that exalted group is hard to come by . . . a most restricted organization.

Now I didn't see his birth certificate and I might as well tell you, right here and now, that no vital statistics are kept in Hunza. I accept the figure of his age as he told me but remember, I was not there at the time of his birth!

When I was through with my spasm of inspection and admiration, we began to parade up the long driveway that led into the Mir's garden. This area is flanked on the right by space that looks as though it were a parking lot, and maybe that's exactly what it is, but instead of cars, the guests or members of the family park—or should I say tether—their horses and yaks in this area. Maybe now they park their jeeps there. The Mir owns two of them, but one, I understand, was away in Pindi being repaired. (Or was it the shambles and horrible wreck of a jeep that I came across a week later, on the road back to Gilgit?)

Now I noticed that the Mir, Ayesh, the doctor and Cec were coming along the roadway to meet us, and soon we joined forces and were gathered in one group. I thought this was the ideal time to take some photographs and, luckily for us, they were the best photographs we took on the entire trip. Photography is something that has never interested me and I had never taken half a dozen pictures in my life. Before leaving home, I did try to learn a bit about photography, but I couldn't learn enough fast enough.

When the fun, excitement and fast-flowing humorous remarks had subsided, I said to the Mir, "If you've nothing more important to do or if you would care to give me a little more of your time, we could start that question and answer session that I arranged with you for this afternoon."

"I am at your service," he replied pleasantly and with alacrity.

So the Mir, the doctor and I proceeded up the stairs to his famed reception sun room. He instructed one of his people, in his own language and soon we were comfortably seated with an assortment of cold drinks before us.

The Mir, the doctor and I then had a long session. I asked questions of the doctor just as readily as I did of the Mir and both answered with equal frankness. At no time did one look at the other to ascertain whether or not he should answer the question. Everything was done on a strict, clear-cut, frank basis.

CHAPTER 34

About the People of Hunza

THE CLAIMS made for the people of Hunza border on the fantastic. It is claimed that there they live to be 140 and more years of age without trouble and that their mountain home is the genuine Shangri-la, where a man can live without worry or stress in perfect joy and happiness. The claim is also made that their men can sire children when they're 70, 80, 90 and even 100 years of age.

Yes, and another visitor to Hunza said that the women of 80 and 90 are as youthful and as beautiful as our own women of 30 and 40. Well, apart from the Rani who I truly believe was one of the most beautiful women I have ever been privileged to see, I didn't notice anything spectacular about the women of Hunza.

Let me be even more frank . . . I hardly saw any women at all. Over the many miles of Hunza territory that I walked, I seldom saw a woman. I saw a few girls

here and there and most of them snickered, giggled and hid or turned their backs so that I couldn't see their faces, just as the girls and women did in Nagir. I did notice and pass many women constantly in the fields, but not once did I think that they even compared with our own attractive women . . . let alone surpass them!

Nor do I want you to get the impression that I am prejudiced. To me, at least, a woman can be beautiful whether she be black, yellow, tanned or white. I believe myself to be the kind of a man who shows no prejudice, at least where women are concerned, if you know what I mean!

Here I also want to state that it could be I was somewhat at a disadvantage. In the Western world, when one meets or sees a woman, it is usually at her best or close to it. Here the situation was, I admit, drastically different. I either saw them in the fields or coming or going to and from the fields to their homes or doing household chores in their homes. None of these occupational hazards would give a woman a chance to show herself at her prettiest or to her own best advantage.

I did not inquire as to the Rani's age. I am generally fairly bold but I just wasn't bold enough to pose that question to the Mir or to the Rani herself, although I had ample opportunity to do so had I the courage.

She would compare favorably in every way with any woman in her twenties. If I did not know her position and I were asked to estimate her age, I would say 24 or 25 but remember, she is the wife of the Mir and has borne him 9 living children, one of whom is married and another of whom is engaged to be married to the Prince of Chitral. Their eldest daughter is married to Yaseen Durishahwar and they have two sons, which means that the Rani is a grandmother. But I still insist that she doesn't look a day over 25.

As I sat and pondered my experiences—things that I had actually seen and witnessed, people whom I had met and talked to—I wondered and asked myself, "Will I be the man who will destroy the myth or will I corroborate it?"

Then I did a little soul searching. When an individual does that, it means he is troubled . . . and I admit that that was exactly my predicament.

I have tried to ascertain the truth of everything I have recorded and related in this book. Most of the time I was fortunate enough to see and do these things for myself. However, some information I had to obtain by asking questions and probing, but in every case I believed the information sincere and honest. You will note that, at all times, I sought my information from the highest and best informed sources available—even at the danger of annoying my host. Friendship and decorum are important conventions but, with me anyway, the quest for knowledge knows no bounds.

There may be errors and omissions and even falsehoods in my story but if there are any, it is by sheer accident or by willful misrepresentation on the part of someone else. Inasmuch as I am concerned, every statement made in this book is true, to the best of my innermost belief and knowledge.

There were many instances, while gathering this information, where facts, stories and other data were related to me and I doubted their veracity. So right there and then I said so. In some instances, I told the people who were giving me information that what they said did not make sense, and either they must have misunderstood or there was something being lost or twisted in the translation. I recall at the moment three such specific instances with entirely different groups and in each case, upon studying and revamping the

question, the error was cleared up.

Remember, I do not claim to be a Sherlock Holmes or smart enough to detect by scent or otherwise an untruth or misunderstanding, so they may crop up in various places in the book.

Long before I left home I had prepared a set of queries. Among them were things for me to investigate —places, customs and chores for me to see and do. And from all this I was to make my own values and estimates as to the validity of the claims made about Hunza and its people. I tried to cover every aspect of importance and interest and I believe that, with very few exceptions, I faithfully accomplished my mission.

In preparation for the trip I read every book I could find or locate that involved Hunza and in each case the author had done a credible job, but most of them had failed miserably to give sufficient information—at least, for me—because 'twas information that I wanted. I wanted to know more about the agriculture of Hunza, about the health of the people, about their methods, their means and their way of life. None of the authors gave much of that vital data.

Right from the first moment that I made plans to go to Hunza I decided that, if I wrote a book, it would contain the most complete, the most detailed and the most thorough study of the people of Hunza yet accomplished by any writer. This determination came upon me from the frustrations I felt when I read the available books on Hunza and was left with a feeling that only the surface of the subject had been scratched.

In my endeavors to fulfill this undertaking, I have spared neither time, effort, risk nor expense. I certainly don't want my readers to be left with the feeling that all about Hunza has not been told. I definitely realize that no one in a short few weeks or even months could

learn all there is to know about these most unusual people. At least I wanted to learn the answers to the many questions that come into the average individual's mind.

Therefore, it is my hope that I have not failed in these positive respects.

If my narrative is not everything that you hoped and expected, I sincerely trust that I will make up in the details and information of an authentic nature that I give to you concerning these remarkable people.

The facial features of the people of Hunza are most striking. They are invariably finer featured than the people of the West—more angular, more clearly outlined and defined, without being harsh or bold. Their facial characteristics can best be described by the phrase "finely, delicately chiseled physiognomy" . . . like the intricate creations of a gifted sculptor.

Whether because of the rugged outdoor life they lead or because of the tanning or curing process of their smoke-filled homes during the winter, the texture of their skin is quite unusual. I think I can describe it best if I say that their faces looked as though they were made out of smooth chamois.

I was struck by the similarity of the features of the people of Hunza. In the West, everybody you meet or know doesn't look like anyone else that you know. In fact, if you do happen to come across someone who has the likeness or features similar to those of someone else you know, you're immediately struck by that resemblance, which illustrates my point. In the Western world, there is a wide divergence of facial features and characteristics. In Hunza that does not hold true.

A little thought will establish the reason for this situation. Intermarriage during the centuries must have been the order of the day because of the confining

nature of their homeland.

However, the Mir pointed out to me most clearly and emphatically that intermarriage among members of one tribe is absolutely forbidden. There are four tribes in the Baltit area and they can marry among these four tribes . . . Diramiting, Khorokoch, Borong, Barataling . . . but definitely not among their own tribe.

Lest this sounds like a difficult matter to hold in check, I want to explain that this is easier to control than may be imagined, for the simple reason that all marriages must be sanctioned and performed by the Mir. Therefore he positively knows who is marrying whom.

However, even if this has been the rule for many hundreds of years, the total population of Hunza, even today, stands at something less than 25,000 souls and Lord Curzon in his memoirs states that in 1894, the total population of Hunza was only 6,000. Therefore, among so small a population, it is almost impossible for them to marry very far beyond a family relationship. (In 1934 it was estimated that the population had risen to 15,000.)

Let's put it in another way. If the people of Hunza have remained more or less a pure people for nigh on 1,000 years and the population today is only 25,000, there must have been fairly close intermarriages. Perhaps that would, as I mentioned, account for the similarity of features.

I want to stress, at this point, that I came to Hunza primarily to learn and study (1) about their health and longevity and (2) about their means and methods of agriculture.

Let's examine or re-examine a few of the more pertinent details of their unusual country.

Hunza is a country that lies along the Hunza River

from Secunderabad to the Chinese border, a distance of somewhere around 200 miles, but no one has ever actually measured it. At the narrowest point it is less than half a mile wide. At its broadest, it is not quite two miles. Usually the only piece of flat land in a village is the polo field. Good, rich, deep soil as Westerners know it is absolutely unknown in Hunza.

Whenever a house is built here, they seldom ever use a piece of fertile soil or soil of any kind. They usually erect it on rock or on a steep hillside where that piece of land could not have been used for agriculture anyway.

Practically every bit of farm land is terraced. It can be said, it is actually cut out of the rocks of the mountainside which is the north bank of the Hunza River.

Of the total length of 200 miles, only a small fraction is at all arable. Most of it is solid rock or terrain so steep that horticulture of any nature is impossible.

Rainfall is scanty. They cannot depend upon it at all for crops. In order to get sufficient water, hand built and similarly maintained conduits bring water down from glaciers. These conduits are carefully erected and trained to run alongside the villages where the water can be trapped to flow where desired and used to irrigate their lands, also for drinking and all other necessary purposes.

There are four main conduits in Hunza and they are as follows:

Murku—This is at the highest level of all the aqueducts and carries the most water.

Barbar—Supplies the Baltit-Altit area.

Dala—This is the longest—extends as far as Aliabad. Supplies Kerimabad.

Hamachi—The smallest which runs as far as the tiny village Ganesh, located on a cliff's edge.

Water rights are regulated by law and a man can use the water from the conduit that passes his land at certain definitely established periods. The flow or shut-off is controlled by placing a large stone or rock at the opening of the channel into the individual's waterway. It may sound a bit baffling to the average individual, but upon viewing it and examining it, it is easy to understand and, what's more important, it is simple and practical.

Nowhere did I see these waterways covered or encased in pipes—although they did in many places run under the roadway.

As their water supply is glacier-fed, there is never any danger of a supply failing . . . at least, not in the imminent future. However, in cloudy periods the flow slackens and an extended cloudy period causes a severe water shortage.

Lest you get the idea that these conduits or waterways are a simple matter, I want to assure you that they are a marvel of engineering. Further, when you consider that the first one was built about 1860 without any man made tools or iron or steel, you can then believe what a difficult and gigantic undertaking it was. It is a monument to their industry, intelligence and foresight. At least now, they have iron picks with which to dig, rather than having to use ibex horns.

Here I want to mention very definitely that the same type of waterway exists on the other side of the river . . . that is, in Nagir territory.

They do not, in any sense of the word, have orchards as we know orchards in the West, because they don't have a piece of land large enough or flat enough to compare with what we know as an orchard. In the West orchard sites are usually selected with the premeditated view of providing excellent drainage. There-

fore, knolls or rolling lands are preferred and gravelly, sandy or light loam soils are chosen.

There are neither rolling lands nor tilthy knolls in Hunza. Here they have to take what they can get and make the best of it. The precipitous bits of arable land are terraced to prevent erosion and the flat pieces, such as there are, create no drainage problem because there is no danger of too much rain.

You will seldom see more than a few dozen fruit trees in one group or area. They are scattered here, there and everywhere and are planted only where and when they can grow to best advantage.

I would also like to mention that fruit and walnut trees are found growing almost everywhere along the roads or trails in the populated area, so no bit of arable land, no matter where it is found, is wasted.

I do not know if there is any dispute as to who owns the crops but all the way from Gilgit to Altit I did not find a bit of ripe fruit on the trees—which means most clearly that somebody harvests the crops at just the right time or when the fruit is at or about proper maturity.

From some of the larders that I examined, I gathered that they certainly wouldn't have any overabundance and I further felt that, by the time winter and early spring passed and before the new crops were ready to harvest, some bellies might have thinned out and some more might even be hungry.

There was no reason for me to disbelieve the Mir when he said Hunza was the "land of just enough" but I still felt that, by the look of things, there would be many occasions when that "just enough" might have to be stretched a little. I was convinced that they certainly did not have too much of any food commodity.

The only two stout men that I met on my entire

sojourn through the area were the Mir's two brothers. The Mir himself, while not tall, is well-built and muscular, but shows no sign of fat.

The Hunzan fruit crops, from my careful observations, are as follows: apricots, Persian walnuts, mulberries, peaches, plums, pears and cherries. These were the sweet cherries. Nowhere did I see any sign of the sour or pie cherries.

Further, I noticed that all of the trees of this type that I saw were old. There were not many young trees, but that is understandable because they allow a tree to grow as long as it is able to bear fruit and they have little or no new space to plant young trees.

The walnut, the mulberry and the apricot trees grow to enormous size—far stronger, broader and heavier than they ever grow in America, although I have seen huge walnut trees and huge cherry trees in the Western world. Peach, pear, plum and apple are not grown nearly as much as the other kinds mentioned.

CHAPTER 35

The Hunzan Economy

FROM THE thrice-told tales of people who write about Hunza and its fertile fields, one might rightfully expect to see bountiful crops of grain bending in the breeze, but I did not expect to see great expanses of waving golden wheat fields in Hunza, so I was not disappointed. The flight from Pindi to Gilgit told me the story better than words. The harsh, flint rock mountains and meager valleys made agriculture a serious, unrelenting affair that taxed man's ingenuity and endurance.

In field crops the Hunzans grow wheat, which I found to be one of their most important foods. I saw more wheat than any other grain. Then there were buckwheat, peas, broad beans, lucerne, millet, barley, rice, onions, potatoes, carrots, turnips and lettuce.

It is said that they can grow two crops a year and, while I did not actually see two crops produced, I noticed that the wheat was harvested in late July and

there would still be ample time to grow another crop before the frost came. Therefore, that adds credence to the statement that they can grow two crops a year.

I gathered that buckwheat was their most important second crop and it was not hard to understand, because it thrives on the poorer and lighter soils, where other grains might not do as well. Further, it needs only about ten weeks to mature and it has the added advantage of flowering and setting its crops continuously, so that a fair harvest can be had at most any time.

Then, too, it is a crop that can stand the colder weather; that is, the chilly nights in early fall and spring that they are bound to have in these high mountain areas. In actuality, the buckwheat blooms continually and flowers, green seed and ripe seed can be found on the plants at one and the same time.

There is another good reason why the Hunzans grow a lot of buckwheat. It invariably leaves the soil in splendid physical condition and believe me, that is very, very important to the people of Hunza. In addition, this crop makes splendid food for their farm animals. It makes a fine green manure as well as a weed smother crop.

It must be remembered that buckwheat makes a dandy emergency crop if and when other earlier crops have failed. So it is not hard to understand why it would be one of the most important grain crops in Hunza.

They don't have bees in Hunza, I was sorry to learn, and therefore there is no buckwheat honey.

The Hunzans are chiefly vegetarians—whether by choice or necessity is hard to establish, although I would say that they had little choice in the matter because they just don't have the area to waste on animals. They can't afford to get their food second-hand. While there

were a few valleys where a bit of pasture might have been established or used, they just couldn't afford to waste acres for pasture purposes.

I did not see any cheese—that is, cheese as we know it—in Hunza, but I maintain that their stored butter is cheese. I knew from what I had read and learned that they have a most unusual method of storing their butter, and one day the Mir sent one of his servants out to bring some in. In a few minutes the servant returned, carrying on a tray a huge bundle that looked like and was slightly larger than a football. He placed it in front of me and told me to go ahead and unwrap it, which I did. It was neatly and firmly wrapped in birchbark and when I removed layer after layer of wet, dripping bark, I at last came to the so-called butter. It was gleaming pure white. A knife was handed to me and I dug a little piece out of the side and tasted it. It was absolutely delicious. It had a fresh wholesome flavor. I thought it was cheese and that is what I really believe it is.

Their method of making this butter is as follows: Goat, sheep, cow or yak milk is used. Their method of churning butter is strictly Eastern. They do not use wooden or metal churns as they are found and known in the West. Usually goat skins are used. They are turned inside out so that the smooth, tanned side is outside. Then the ends of the hide are carefully sewn together. Openings are allowed to remain by means of the legs, and these are used for filling the skin with the milk to be churned and later to extract the butter. While the churning is taking place, the leg openings are firmly tied.

Then the milk-filled hide is joggled, weedled, spanked, turned and twisted over the knees and this is maintained continually until some sort of solidification takes place. Just as with us, impatience and inquisitive-

ness become master and the shaking is stopped, while a peek is taken by untying a leg opening to see if the process is beginning.

When at last butter is formed, it is squeezed out of the skin churn and then they make firm round balls out of it. It is wrapped in birchbark, placed underneath a water channel and left there for months, or years as the case may be. One record through which I poured related that this butter was sometimes kept for 100 years. I found no verification of this from the citizens of Hunza. Perhaps in this instance the butter was forgotten and was discovered many years later, but it is kept for years and is usually brought out for special celebrations and other occasions.

Now you will hear the word "ghee" referred to on every hand when talking about food. This is the selfsame butter but heated to the melting point and allowed to harden. By then it turns into a bright yellow color. It is used as a spread but also for cooking, baking, frying and such. Most Hunzans prefer "ghee" over the plain ordinary butter. The Mir told me that he and his household all preferred it to butter.

So therefore, besides the fruit, nuts, grain and vegetable crops, they have curd, ghee, butter (cheese) and milk. Those who do eat meat would be lucky if they could afford to have it more than two or three times a year, but I understand meat is available for most festive occasions.

While in all probabilities they dry other types of fruit, I did not see any other dried fruits but apricots. On my travels throughout the country I saw thousands of trees and probably millions of apricots but I did not see one go to waste. Everywhere I went apricots were drying. They had been split open, the stone removed and stored and the fruit left for the sun and air to cure and dry

them. Even apricots that were bruised, damaged or even starting to rot were put out to dry. No treatment of any kind was used . . . just simply nature at work.

An apricot tree is a most valuable asset in Hunza. It is a fact that an apricot tree is often willed to a daughter by parents and she can retain her rights to the tree and of course the crops that come from it for her lifetime.

In the Western world, the apricot is not considered a long-lived tree. In America, especially, it is considered not much longer lived than a peach or a plum and that means at the most, 25 or 30 years of life. When you take into consideration the truth that in Hunza apricot trees live to be well over 100 years, one wonders just where the difference comes in.

I really believe that I have the answer. In Hunza apricots are grown from seed. No matter where I looked or sought I could find no tree nursery in either Nagir or Hunza. (I did find a small government nursery in Gilgit.) Therefore I would assume that every Hunzan farmer grows his own trees from the planting of the apricot seeds. No doubt some Hunzan farmers are more adept at this task than others and they probably grow a few extra ones and maybe trade them for other things with their neighbors.

But, as explained, the trees here last many, many years and the orchard space or land to grow them on is very limited. Therefore, there would be little or no demand for nursery stock. I inquired wherever I went concerning grafting and I tried to establish whether or not they knew anything about the process and how much they knew, but I came up against a blank wall. I could gather no definite information. That they know how to graft and are acquainted with the process, I am sure but to what extent it is used, I could not establish.

Now the case in the Western world and specifically in America is entirely different. Most of the apricots in America are positively grafted or budded on either plum or peach rootstock. This tends to make the tree bear a crop much sooner than it would on its own roots. On a plum root the apricot tree will grow in damp soils that would not be tolerated by the apricot itself or by the apricot grown on a peach root. However, the fact that the apricot is budded on peach or plum definitely makes its life span about 30 years at the utmost.

To the best of my knowledge and belief, nowhere in America can you purchase apricot seedlings, nor are they listed by any of the wholesale nurseries or growers. This would clearly indicate that apricots are invariably grown on a foreign rootstock as mentioned above. Undoubtedly this has much to do with the longevity of the Hunzan apricot trees. In Europe apricot seedlings are available and used as the rootstock on which to graft and bud apricots, which is as it should be.

However, from my investigations, I did learn that more than 20 different kinds of apricots are known and grown in Hunza. This does prove that grafting or budding or both are known in Hunza. The fruit that I did see and eat was by no means superior to that grown in the rest of the world. In fact, if anything, it was of inferior size and quality.

This may come as a shock to many people who believe that everything the people of Hunza do is superior to that done anywhere else in the world. Unfortunately, I must relate things as I found them.

In America, for example, a farmer would not hesitate to remove a tree or even an orchard that was producing undersized or inferior quality fruit, because he's depending on his fruit for marketing purposes. Remember, too, in America size and yield are the two most im-

portant qualities desired by all fruit growers. The reason is obvious . . . because the consuming public will readily buy the larger fruits. The quality is practically always judged by appearance, not by its flavor.

For the moment I am using exactly the same yardstick in Hunza and it is upon that fact that I am making my comparison. I have discovered the reason why all travelers to Hunza report the high succulent good flavor of the Hunzan apricot, and the explanation is simple. Invariably, when you eat an apricot in Hunza, it has been tree-ripened or you pick it directly from the tree and eat it and it is at its pinnacle of flavor and goodness, whereas in America, when you buy apricots, whether at a fruit stall or supermarket, that selfsame apricot might have been picked two weeks prior when it was green and ripened artificially or at least ripened away from its parent. Therefore, no comparison in flavor can be made.

Another valid reason for the popularity, or should I say necessity, of growing apricots in that mountainous region is because the apricot is one of the first trees to ripen its fruit. Apricots as a rule mature with cherries. However, the cherry requires a much shorter period from blossom to fruit and to make up this period, the apricot blooms very early. In fact, it is generally conceded to be the first of all tree fruits to show its flowers. A few warm sunny days in the early spring will bring out the apricot blossoms in their full charm and beauty.

It is seldom that they get through their blossoming period without frost of lighter or greater degree striking them, whether it be in Hunza or Niagara. But the apricot blooms, even though beautiful and tender of look, are really rugged and hardy, can take the cold weather and mature large crops of delicious fruit in spite of the chilly, frosty weather at blossoming time.

Among people—yes, even experienced old-time gardeners and orchardists—there are many who believe that pollination by bees is required in all cases to set a crop of fruit. For many types of fruit and plants, this holds true; pollination by bees or other insects is essential. But in the case of the apricot and many others, wind pollination is the means that nature employs, and actually it is safer and surer than pollination by insects. Rain is also an effective pollinator, contrary to many people's conception and belief. I believe I would be safe in stating that wind pollination is the means of fertilizing more plants than can be claimed for bees and other insects combined.

All Hunzans own their own land and house. They pay no rent or taxes. Each citizen does his share of road building, taking care of the water channels and maintenance. The Mir leases his land to various individuals, most of them young people who as yet own no land of their own, or those who have insufficient for their needs. They pay him by means of services rendered and shares of the crops.

CHAPTER 36

2000 Years of Bread!

ONE OF THE THINGS that I did want to witness with my own eyes was the feeding and operation of a flour mill in Hunza. Apart from all of the other important and interesting data that I had hoped to gather while in this part of the world, the operation of the wheat mill was one that to me had great portent. I wanted to see the wheat actually going into the mill and coming out as flour.

Bread is said to be the staff of life. Well, whether it is or not remains a moot question. But to me at least, bread is important. I always have been a big bread eater.

Now it was only during the past few years that by reading and learning I found out how useless or even harmful the pleasant white loaf that we know in America is and can be. Having a fair idea about the health record as it exists in America and knowing the kind of

bread we eat, I was greatly interested when I heard about the people of Hunza and then found out that they eat only bread that is made from whole grain.

Then, when the same books or facts brought to light that the people of Hunza knew few of the world's ills, my interest was aroused to almost a fever pitch. I wondered if there was any connection between the kind of bread that we ate and our health and the kind of bread they ate in Hunza and their health.

From my own observations I also learned that wheat was the most important crop in Hunza, with the exception of apricots. I have also tried to establish which was the first domesticated grain in the annals of human history and I have not been able to establish clearly whether it was wheat or millet. But wheat is more adaptable to the temperate zones, whereas millet leans more to the warmer climes and it is clearly established that wheat is preferred by the white races.

I soon learned that there was a flour mill that functioned regularly, located on the route that we took from the palace at Baltit to the old palace or old fort. So on one of my walks I made it a point to investigate thoroughly the location, the workings and the construction of this old mill.

On my way up when we stopped at Chalt I saw one of these mills in operation, but I did not actually see the grain being made into flour.

For a man who has spent most of his life in the country and on a farm, I feel embarrassed to admit that I had never seen a flour mill in operation before.

During the past quarter of a century, or even a longer period, milling has, generally speaking, come into the hands of large corporations and that is why, I assume, I got it into my head that milling was a complicated big-time operation that required a great investment

and the hiring of many employees. I've tried to analyze how I mentally reached these conclusions and eventually I saw the light. I knew that the grain had to be stored in huge elevators, then transported to the mill in carload quantities and from the railroad cars it was carried or blown into huge bins and then from there into hoppers that fed it into the rolling mill itself. Then the process of separating the bran, then the wheat germ and then the flour took place. The next process, I understood, was for the flour to be ground even more minutely and then bleached. After this had all been accomplished there were some government rules or regulations that compelled the mills to fortify or replace some of the important values that had been removed.

Now after you have read the above, can you blame me for getting the idea that milling was a costly and complicated process? Again, I must confess, even to the extent of being embarrassed, that I had to travel to Hunza to learn the truth about milling. Then perhaps I need not be ashamed of my ignorance because the problem of making bread from grains has been plaguing mankind for more than 6,000 years, during which time much blood has been shed, governments have been overthrown and billions of dollars in profits have been made. Yes, the whole story of human existence can be written and told in terms of man's staff of life—bread!

When we stop to realize that bread has been the mainstay of human diet for almost 6,000 years, we ought to bury our heads in shame to admit that our knowledge concerning this life-giving or life-destroying food is so meager and inadequate. Not one person in a thousand realizes, knows or understands, what is contained in the food upon which he leans heavily and of which he consumes large quantities, not only every

day but in most cases, at every meal.

It came as quite a surprise to me to learn that milling was one of the most simple operations that could be devised and that difficulties and complications only arose when we sought to deviate from the natural way of doing things.

So now at last I was there watching a Hunzan flour mill in action. In all probabilities the same milling process is followed in practically all countries of the world where flour is milled in a simple manner.

My first impression as I watched the flour pouring from between the revolving stones was, "How easy—how utterly simple! Why should anyone in the world be denied access to that vital health-giving food?" Any man can have his own pure whole wheat flour, from which he can have made his wholesome delicious whole wheat bread, by the simple means of putting a grain of wheat between two stones and rubbing the two stones together.

In this Hunzan flour mill, wheat is poured into a suspended hopper made of wood, but shaped like and about the same size as a grain sack and tapered to a narrow opening just above the millstones. Attached under the opening is a small trough, tilted slightly. This trough sits with its lower end over the hole in the stone. Then right there at the mouth of the trough a wooden stick is attached so that it will dangle at the mouth of the opening and as the mill rotates, this stick taps against the opening and causes the grain to drop out in regulated amounts. Thus, the flow of the wheat into the opening of the millstone is governed.

The millstone is rotated by direct drive from the water wheel. From the conduit up above, a stone is removed and the water is allowed to run down a spillway, which leads under the mill house and is made to

splash against the water wheel or paddle. The force is sufficient to make the millstone revolve at a tremendous pace. The water can be quickly shut off by just putting the missing stone back in place, diverting the water flow down the conduit.

The millstones are enclosed by a tray or bin about 5 or 6 inches high. As the ground wheat or flour is forced out between the stones, it slowly fills the bin. Then it is scooped up into goatskin bags, usually by a woman who is looking after the mill. In this manner it is carried to the individual homes to be used in making the wholesome whole wheat Hunzan bread and chapatties.

There appeared to be no large scale or assembly line grinding. Each individual came in with a container of wheat to be ground.

Barley and rye are also used for flour and occasionally, millet and buckwheat.

The earliest crop that can be ground into flour in Hunza is barley. After the long winter, food supplies are worn to the near starvation level and when the first barley is ready for harvest, people of Hunza have cause to celebrate and do so in their barley festival.

I soon learned why chapatties were used in preference to bread, not only in Hunza but all over Pakistan and India. A chapatty requires only flour and water, a bit of mixing and then rolling out and laying on a piece of metal that is laid over a fire. In a few minutes it can be turned and then it is ready for eating. Even though bread might taste better, it certainly would require a lot more preparation. Simplicity is the keynote!

From what I saw, very little flour is stored and probably the people of Hunza have long ago learned their lesson, that wheat ground into flour does not have long keeping qualities.

There is more wheat grown in Hunza than any other single grain crop. Therefore the wheat they use must be one of the vitally important contributors to the health of these people.

If you will take time to study the habits or the peculiarities concerning the growing of wheat, you will quickly learn that wheat will not grow on poor or unbalanced soils. One of the first things that my father taught me many long years ago was that your best land must be used if you want to grow a good crop of wheat. Rye or barley, he told me, you can grow most anywhere, but wheat is fussy. If the nutrients aren't there in the soil, the wheat will not grow and your crop will be a failure. All through my travels in Nagir and Hunza I saw wheat and it looked good. It wasn't the same tall wheat that we grow in the Canadian West, but it was wheat and the yield was comparatively bountiful, which means that the Hunzan soil must contain the required nutrients—and to grow wheat, there are many.

Therefore there is a direct connection between the nutrient contents of the soil of Hunza and the wheat that it grows, the flour that they use, the bread that they eat and the health of these people.

Here and now I want to explain that I am not making decisions for anyone. I am trying to lay down the facts as I found them. As stated above, in order to grow good wheat or even to grow wheat at all, the soil must contain all of its required nutrients. It is obvious, therefore, that the soil has the required nutrients and as all of the Hunzan soil is shallow, these nutrients must be regularly reincorporated into the soil.

I have already related that everything that is taken from the soil is returned to the soil by the natives. Consequently we know that nothing is lost. Hunza does not export food. That I know, because there is barely

sufficient for their own needs. They often trade or barter with the Nagirwals for short items.

Therefore, is the ordinary means of field husbandry as practiced by the people of Hunza the answer? It must be at least part of the story, but how big a part, I am unable to say.

CHAPTER 37

Hunza Fat Factory

I SOMETIMES BELIEVE—in fact, it is a conviction of mine—that in America we waste or cast aside the most vital parts of many foods and we use as food the part that is of lower nutritive content.

In Hunza the kernels of the apricots are gathered and stored. Some of them are cracked and eaten out of hand. But the major portion is put away for future use and then turned into apricot oil.

Never, ever did I see one single apricot kernel wasted in Hunza. If you tasted the kernel of the apricot, you'd soon know why. It is every bit as delicious and fine flavored as the finest almond. In fact, the almond, peach and apricot are very closely related. I contend that the flavor of the apricot seed is every bit as good as that of the almond. The almond, however, gains its popularity and superiority because of its thinner shell, which means easier cracking.

It is clear that the Hunzans have long, long ago learned a secret that we in the Western world have only discovered recently . . . that the nut or kernel of a fruit or seed deteriorates rapidly and can be the cause of ill health if allowed to remain for any length of time outside its natural shell or covering and then consumed . . . for the Hunzans never crack the hard coat of the apricot stones until they want to use the kernels. From my experience with seeds of varying kinds and types during the past 30 years—whether grain, vegetable, fruit, nut or other—I have learned that no living seed whatsoever should have its skin or shell broken or removed until it is actually going to be eaten, planted or put to some other use.

Within the walls of the seed or nut coat are contained some of nature's greatest miracle workers. Underneath that ingenious covering are found the required enzymes, the spark of life, that breaks dormancy and tells the seed when to start to grow . . . or that can hold that large, tiny or microscopic embryo in suspended animation for a few hours or a thousand years, until conditions amenable to the needs of that species are located. If and when the environmental factors are met, the seed coat immediately fulfills its function and growth begins.

Therefore, it is never advisable to remove the shell or the protective coat from any seed or grain—especially of those that are going to be eaten.

It has been recently disclosed by science that seeds whose outer coatings have been removed can be harmful if eaten by a human. In some instances, it is suspected that they can be of carcinogenic character. Is it not remarkable that these people, who have had little or no contact with what we know as civilization and learning, have for almost 2000 years known enough not to do things that we have learned about only recently?

I had never seen oil made or rendered from any fruit, food or grain and I asked if I could be allowed to witness this process from the beginning. Arrangements were made and I went to visit a plain ordinary Hunzan house where the mistress was prepared and willing to demonstrate the making of apricot oil.

The lady and some of her children sat on the floor with a neat stack of apricot stones beside them. Then she and one of her youngsters took each individual stone and split it open with a rock. The meats were taken out and piled into a stone mortar. Then, when they had filled the mortar, the lady got her pestle and began to pound the kernels until they were made into a meal. Next, she rubbed it with her hands until it was worked into a paste. This she placed into an iron skillet, which was placed over a three-sided stone stove. Then she broke up some small chips of wood that she had ready, ignited them and moved the pan about over the heat until it began to warm up. She kept rubbing and kneading the meal with her hands in the skillet until it got quite warm—but not hot, for she used her hands for turning it in the pan.

Then, she lifted up the mass and put it into a round, solid, earthenware or stone receptacle about 12 inches in diameter, with the sides about two or two and a half inches high. She kneaded this with her fingers and knuckles firmly, much more firmly than one would in kneading dough for bread.

Then, a tablespoonful of water was poured over the meal and the massaging process was continued. It was explained to me that sometimes tea is used instead of water. If the pits are bitter pits from the wild fruit, plain water is used, but for sweet pits from the propagated apricots salt water is used.

The bitter pits are gathered from the trees that grow

wild in various parts of the area. The oil rendered from these kernels is probably used only for lighting, because it is poisonous. Due to their heavy content of prussic acid, a handful of them is considered deadly. In Niagara, if somebody wants to commit suicide, he jumps over Niagara Falls; in Hunza, they eat a batch of wild apricot kernels.

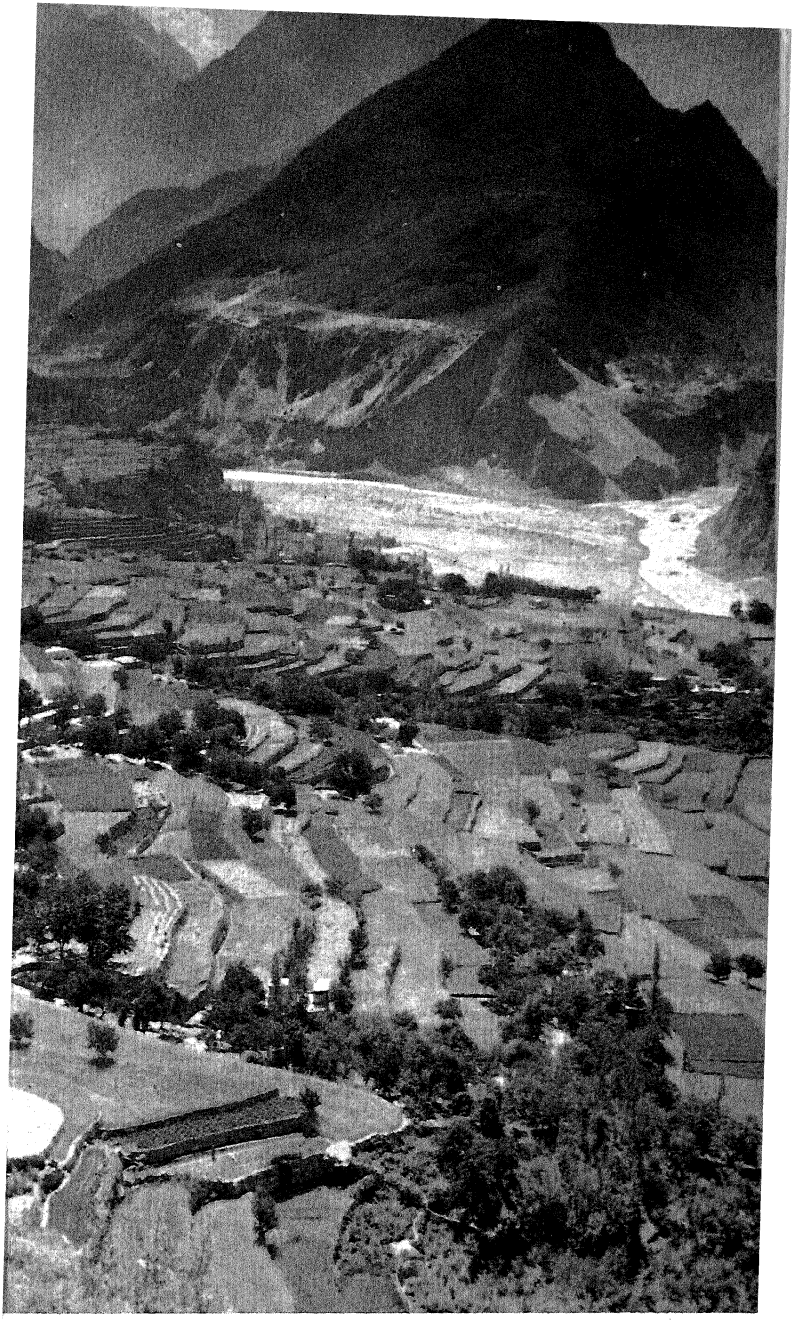
The kneading process is continued and the vessel is kept tilted so the oil runs down and forms a small pool. As the oil begins to form, the kneading becomes even more vigorous until every drop of oil possible is extracted. While the rendering of the oil may be hard on the knuckles, nothing could be simpler and the resulting product is probably the most healthful and finest fat product that human hands can produce.

The pulp that remains after the oil is extracted is fed to milk-giving goats, sheep or cows, and is often used as a concoction or shampoo in which the Hunzans wash their heads. The oil of course is used in cooking, baking, frying, for lighting—and even for the hair.

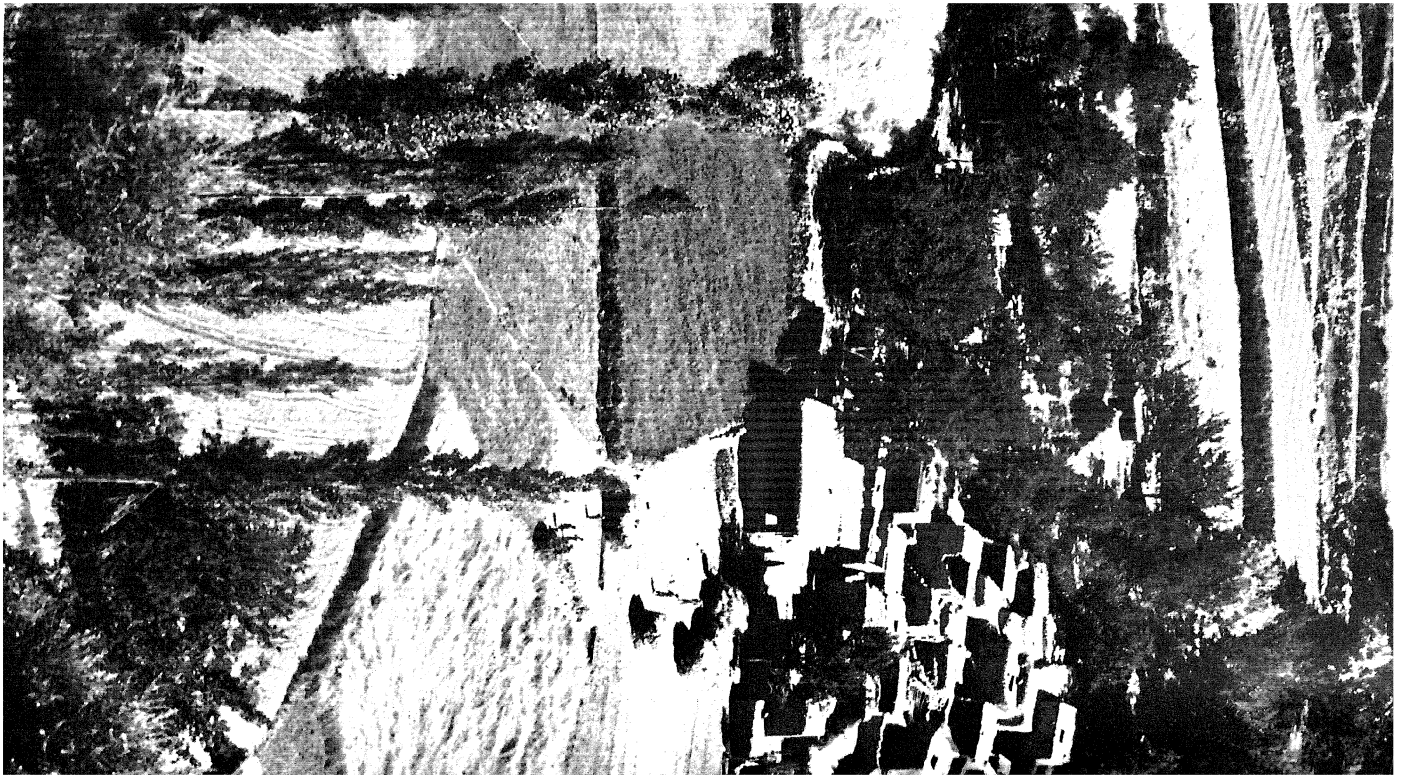
The good woman who performed the oil extracting task for me did not seem to be the least bit overburdened or taxed from this sort of arduous work. It probably would have been a hard day's work for a Western woman.

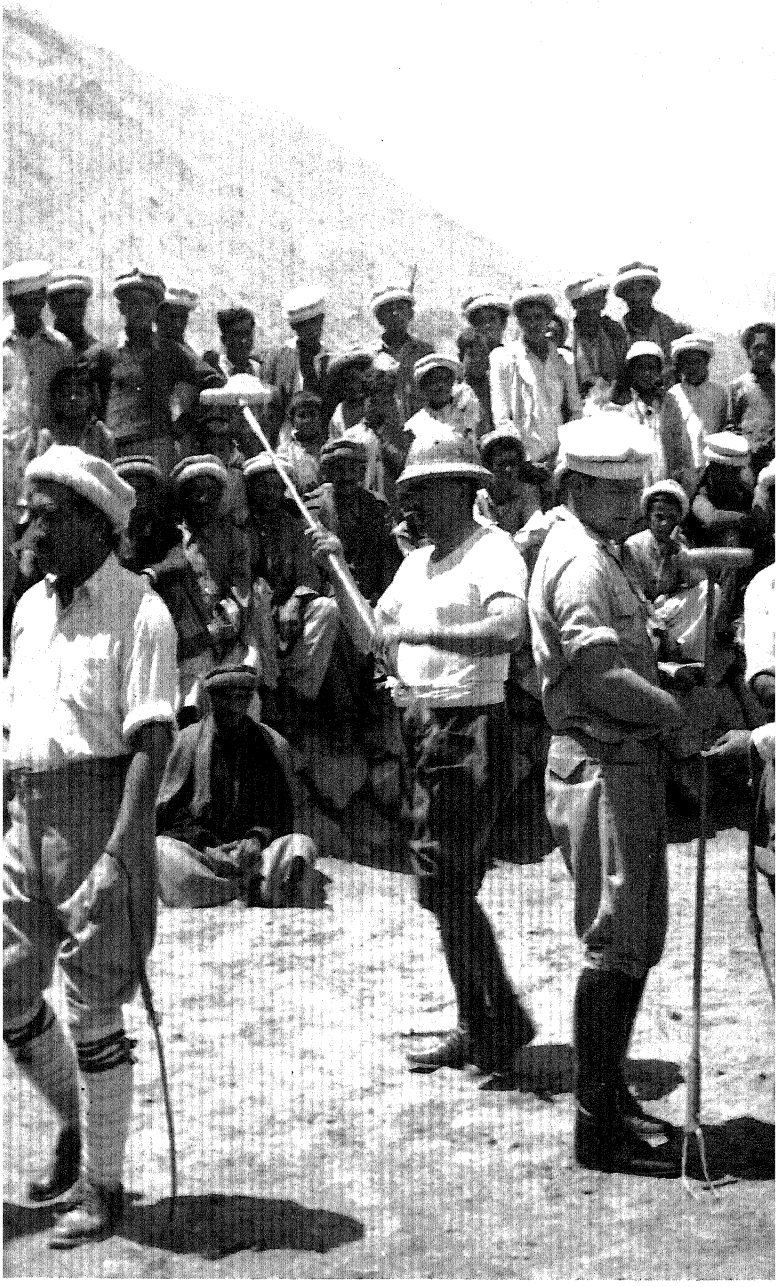
I would like to stress at this point that the heating process was not a cooking process in any sense of the word. Just a slight warming was all that was needed.

The apricot oil is never rendered and stored in casks or otherwise, like many other people do with their oils. They may make sufficient to last them a few days but not more. This is poured into an earthen vessel or a bottle, if available. When a further supply is required, the pits are cracked and they go through the entire process as outlined.



The largest area of land suitable for farming in Hunza—located near Baltit.





Choosing sides for a polo match. Rakaposhi is in the background.

Whether or not apricot oil contains any special qualities I am unable to say. Perhaps someone will do some research on it in the near future and perhaps we will learn that apricot oil is another of the reasons why the Hunzans keep their health.

But for the moment, contrast the way the Hunzans get their oil and the way the people of the Western world get theirs. I know of no oil that is offered for general sale in America that is not treated or rendered by a harsh chemical solvent. Nor do I know of any oil sold or that is generally procurable on which a color extractor or bleach is not used. There is no reason why we cannot have apricot oil in the West, but if we did have it, I'm afraid any or most of its good, health-giving effects would be lost, if a solvent or a bleaching agent were employed.

Yes, I do know that there are vegetable oils offered on the market that have been prepared by the expeller method, but such oils are seldom seen, are quite expensive and only the keenly health-minded people who know what they want will pay the price and look for them.

Maybe sunflower seed oil, corn oil or olive oil are every bit as good as apricot oil, but the *process*—therein lies the secret of health or disease. The most satisfactory method of rendering oil from grains or nuts is the simple natural cold press process, after which it is filtered.

The accent during the past few years has been markedly towards the vegetable oils against animal oils. Researchers seem to have proven without any fear of contradiction, that the vegetable oils are much less harmful or actually beneficial to the human system, whereas the animal oils are suspected as being prime contributors in most cases to arteriosclerosis and ultimately, heart disease.

So now, almost every housewife is turning towards vegetable oils to prolong the life of her husband and give greater health to her family and herself. However, I suspect that the processing has rendered any benefits not only doubtful, but maybe has turned them into something that has a physically degenerative effect.

Again the people of Hunza seem to have won an easy victory over us in the matter of what oil to use by simply staying with nature, working with her and taking what she has to offer, rather than trying to beat her at her own game.

There is another aspect that I would like to point out at this time and that is that I believe, for the oil process, it would be better if stored stones or pits were used, rather than fresh ones. If fresh pits were used, there would be a much higher moisture content and therefore the oil would require much more working or kneading before it would be rendered.

I see no reason why apricot pits couldn't be stored for more than one year if kept in a comparatively cool, dry place. Thus, they would give their oil more readily, because only the water would be evaporated during the lapse of time.

A handful of apricot meats would be required to render about one ounce of oil.

CHAPTER 38

Crop Rotation--Harvesting

WHENEVER I TALKED to a farmer—and, of course, practically all people in Hunza are farmers—I asked what crops they grew and then asked how many years they had been growing wheat or potatoes or barley on a specific field. In every case the answer came back that some other crop different from the present one was raised there last year. I tracked this down carefully because I wanted to clearly establish whether or not they followed the rotating program in raising their food crops.

Even before setting foot in Hunza, I was certain that they could never have remained alive and in good health under such difficult conditions and with the limited available land, unless a rigid scheme of crop rotation was followed. Yet from what I actually saw on the scene, I reached the conclusion that this was easier said than done. It's all right to rotate crops where you have

lots of land and where, if necessary, you can allow some of it to lie fallow. But here they needed every bit of land they could get. It was actually a matter of life and death.

In a country where land is as scarce as it is in Hunza, there would be a very strong temptation against allowing land to lie fallow. I assure you that this technique is positively practiced. Then, too, there is a strong temptation to use a few pats of cow or yak dung for fuel during the cold winter nights. Yet, in most of Hunza, common sense and wisdom prevail and the excrement is used where it belongs—on the land.

I can see no hope that the land situation in Hunza will improve, but the very fact that it has continued to exist and flourish for over 1,000 years is ample proof that their way of life, their methods and means of agriculture, are right. It is only by practicing rigid, persevering methods of control and natural methods of agriculture that they have been able to survive.

With land so scarce one might be tempted to get away from crop rotation. But the people of Hunza are too wise to succumb to that type of thinking. They know that if crop rotation were not practiced rigorously, disease, sickness and death would soon follow. They know that no people anywhere in the world are "healthier than their soil."

History relates and offers proof of many civilizations who failed to follow the practices and principles of sound agriculture and to return to the land that which belonged to and came from the land. This practice invariably led to ruin and extermination. This selfsame horticultural technique is being practiced in many countries throughout the world today and the results will be the same—disastrous—as only time will prove.

No matter where I walked or went or rode in either

Hunza or Nagir, not once did I see a bit of organic material of any kind wasted or destroyed. The people made regular foraging trips to different parts of the country and always brought back for their land any grass or other organic material that was found and could be brought home.

They would walk many miles in search of grass or green growth of any kind. Regularly I saw men, women and boys carrying huge packs on their backs. It was a mass of green packed into a cloth and carried to their farm to be fed to the animals or distributed over the small fields.

Up until the present time chemical fertilizers have not invaded Hunza. Whether there is any connection between the splendid health of the Hunzans and the fact that they have never used commercial fertilizers, I am unable to state. But it is worth considering!

Remember, there are no forests, peat bogs or other sources of organic material like we have in most parts of Europe and America. Every bit of organic material that the Hunzan farmer uses or procures is got at the expense of hard work or difficult travel. So it is easy to see why they can afford to waste not one iota of this life-sustaining substance.

If you have ever traveled to Switzerland, you would probably be struck or amazed by the neat piles of manure that are built in front of most farm residences and there a man's prestige and intrinsic value are estimated by the size of his manure pile. Don't laugh—I'm not joking! I'm dead serious and I swear this is absolutely true! Wise, oh, very wise, are the Swiss!

In Hunza, unfortunately, manure piles are seldom if ever encountered because the manure is placed on their fields as soon as it is ready. I looked into countless animal stables but never once did I see a manure pile . . .

either there or anywhere else. Obviously it is placed directly on the fields or at least at definite short intervals.

Here the Hunzan system again showed some notable difference from the method practiced in the West. Practically all farmers in the West allow their manure to accumulate in piles or actually stack it in that manner. It is usually left there from one season to another at least and often longer. I've heard them refer to the older manure piles as well cured ones. I've always bemoaned this fact—yes, back as much as 20 years ago—because with every rain and with the snows in the winter, potent, rich, nutrient-ladened juices flowed off into the streams from my land and other lands. No one can deny that a fair part of the value of the manure is leached away forever.

In Hunza it is spread regularly on the land, between crops in the spring and summer. I distinctly saw many farms on which the manure had been distributed being plowed in. This is never done, to my knowledge, in the West. Therefore the Hunzan farmer does not lose any of his valuable, natural manures by leaching.

Because there is such a scarcity of organic materials, it is obvious that excrement must be used to the fullest extent. I looked, I gazed, I searched, I peered but nowhere did I see a sign of any human excrement being accumulated, saved or being used on the Hunzan farms. This mystified me.

In practically all parts of India and in some parts of Pakistan and perhaps in other Eastern countries, it is customary for the citizenry to stoop at the curb, right out in the middle of the street or sometimes beside a bush or planting of shrubs, and right there and then evacuate water or feces. No, this is not an exaggeration or a fairy tale, but the simple, unadulterated truth that is seldom told.

That people avoid discussing this unpleasant topic is understandable; yet, by doing so, you and others who have no opportunity of visiting these areas are often given an incorrect picture. Whereas, in Pakistan and India, this unpleasant business took place practically everywhere, it was with a genuine feeling of relief and thankfulness that I found in Hunza it is positively never practiced—at least, I never saw even a sign of any such thing taking place—but evidently human excrement is used there. It is buried and eventually finds its way to the fields.

It took quite a search to track down the ways and means and methods of using this night-soil. I know that it is used extensively in the East and for that matter, it is also used in Mexico and perhaps in other parts of the Western world. There is no reason why it shouldn't be used if proper methods of curing or mellowing are followed. After all is said and done, our septic tanks are only putting a natural principle to work, but the shame of it is that in most cases it is entirely wasted.

The most common method of using night-soil in Hunza was to place it in a deeply (as deep as the rocky terrain of Hunza would allow) dug pit, which was carefully kept covered, and eventually, a year or two later, it was distributed over the fields.

Harvesting a crop of grain in Hunza is very much unlike our Western methods. They do not cut their grain but each wheat plant, or other grain, is pulled out individually, root and all, by hand. Then it is laid in neat bundles on the ground. When the harvesting or grain pulling process is complete, the roots are separated from the stalks by being cut or chopped off in bundles.

CHAPTER 39

Oh, Happy, Happy Day!

WHAT CONSTITUTES a Hunzan's day?

If anyone were to ask you to describe a normal, ordinary, usual American's day, you might be harder pressed than you think if you tried to outline it clearly and distinctly. And the reasons are manifold. Seldom, if ever, are two days identical.

For example, a city man may assume that the farmer's day is all cut and dried and fixed and that he follows a regular routine from the moment he arises until he goes to bed that night. If you were to ask a farmer about a city man's day, he would just casually assume that a definite pattern were followed from the time he arose, shaved, brushed his teeth, had his breakfast and caught the trolley or took the car to his business . . . then a period off for lunch and perhaps a coffee break . . . then he'd put in some more time till 5 o'clock came round and then back home he'd go again . . . have his

evening meal, watch TV and then to bed.

While this may all sound very good and very logical and fit into what we believe is a pattern, the average day is really unlike what I have described here for either the city dweller or the farmer. The truth of the matter is that, as I said at the start, no two days are entirely alike.

The day of the week plays an important role. The weather contributes its variation. Then we all know full well that not even a minute is predictable. So how could anyone expect to give a clear-cut résumé of what any person's day consists?

That is somewhat the way I felt when I set out to outline what a day would be like as lived by the average citizen of Hunza. The only thing that I can hope to set out is a pattern. It may have a few or even hundreds of variations but at least the general pattern will be clear. So here is what I believe to be the procedure of one day—an ordinary day—in the life of a Hunzan.

The people of Hunza are Mohammedans of the Ismaili sect. They are in no way fanatical. In fact, the Ismaili are probably the least religious of all Mohammedans. The call to prayer is at 3:30 in the morning. Only the more pious and devout attend the service at the mosque.

A good true religious Mohammedan prays 5 times a day and on each occasion the prayer will last up to one hour, but through my entire travels through both Nagir and Hunza I saw very few instances where they took time off to pray during the day except on religious holidays or festivals. But, as I mentioned, prayer starts at 3:30 A.M. and I didn't have occasion to see them in action. Those who are devout usually pray from 3:30 to 4:30 and then go have their breakfast and so to the fields.

The breakfast, most meager by our standards, consists of a bowl of fresh or boiled apricots with chapatties. This is sufficient to keep the family working in the fields or doing other household and farm chores until 10 o'clock.

Then lunch is served and it is made up of fresh or boiled vegetables, dried apricots and chapatties. The men get two chapatties for this meal, whereas the women and children are restricted to one chapatty. Then off again to their duties—invariably on the land.

The midday meal is usually taken between 1 and 2 o'clock and in the summer this would mean, during the hottest part of the day. For this meal dried apricots, rubbed with the hands in water to form a soup, constitute the main course. A bowl or cupful of this gruel is drunk. This is the procedure during the months when fresh apricots from the trees are not available. During the period from late spring until autumn, fresh apricots are always available and these are used instead of the dried ones.

The dinner hour usually reigns from 5 to 7 o'clock. For this meal more food than for the other meals is used and consumed. Vegetables, either or both boiled and raw, are eaten along with any one of the fruits like plums, peaches, pears, apples or apricots—then always chapatties.

If I haven't made it clear before, chapatties are the bread that is used almost exclusively throughout Pakistan and India. These are flat unleavened sheets of bread made from whole wheat—stone ground. They are the Indian "staff of life."

Cooking and preparation of meals as we know it in the average home in America is definitely not part of the Hunzan way of life. Whereas in our way of life most foods are prepared by boiling, frying, baking,

roasting or broiling, in Hunza most of the foods are eaten raw or lightly cooked.

To me, at least, the reason was plain and clear . . . they have little or no fuel. Coal is unknown, wood extremely hard to get . . . they have to go a long way to find a bit of forest or woodland. I saw practically none in the Hunza area. In another area I visited—Punial—one could see a few trees and copses that represented their woodlands. But timber suitable for firewood was not within reach of the people of Hunza. The bit of wood they did get would most likely come from an apricot or other fruit tree that had outlived its usefulness.

One of the most important reasons that apricots have become such an important part in the Hunzan diet is the fact that, by having found or created early, midseason and late varieties, the Hunzan season for apricots extends two full months. This is a most vital consideration and is well worth remembering.

The staple oil or fat of the people is apricot oil. Ghee is used regularly, but butter can only be afforded and used on special occasions.

During the entire summer seldom, if ever, is meat served or seen on an average Hunzan's table, but during the three hard winter months (December, January and February) meat or chicken is sometimes used, if available (which is seldom). Even then, it is used only by the more prosperous or wealthy people. The poorer people can't afford to kill their cattle and use them for beef except on special occasions or religious holidays.

When I say the poorer people, I should qualify this statement, for there are no class distinctions whatsoever in Hunza. However, there are those families who own but one acre of land and there are those who own 10 acres. Therefore it is to be expected that there would be a difference in their living standards.

A farmer who owned and worked 10 acres of workable land might be able to afford to slaughter a sheep, a goat or a bullock once a year. Yet this luxury could not be dreamed of by the farmer with but one acre.

Also, while winter lasts, a glass of wine made from Hunzan grapes is enjoyed occasionally . . . but chiefly by the male head of the household.

Knives, forks and spoons as are used in the West are not seen in the average Hunzan home and even earthenware plates are rare. But cups and earthenware bowls are to be found in most homes. Wooden bowls fashioned out of walnut by the wood-turner of the village are also used in many homes.

The rooms are quite bare in most homes. Furniture is a luxury and a rarity. In the homes there are found usually a chest, a chair or a couch and a table. Shelves to hold dishes are seen in most every home. Occasionally, a dresser or cabinet can be found. The floor in an average Hunzan home is an earthen one with a large square hole in the center for the fire. Then, of course, there is a large square hole in the roof to allow the smoke to leave and to allow light to enter, for there are no glass windows. This is fully open in the summer but during the colder winter days the hole is kept partly or almost closed. This is the chief contributor to the eye troubles which affect many people in Hunza, as mentioned elsewhere in this book.

At one time little or no money ever entered Hunza and the meager trade that they did do with passing caravans was by means of barter. The caravans coming through from China would bring cooking utensils, cloth, silk, tea and other commodities. For these, the people of Hunza would trade some of their crops or would work as coolies, porters or bearers.

During the past few years a bit of money has come

into Hunza. At the time I was there, there were four expeditions doing mountain and glacier climbing—as well as investigations and research, not in Hunza, but in the vicinity. There were groups from Great Britain, Italy, Switzerland and Germany. In each and every case these expeditions would require bearers, guides, horses and pack animals. These would be recruited from among the Nagirwals and Hunzans and they would be paid in Pakistan rupees. I wish to emphasize that this has only taken place during the past few years. Prior to this period expeditions in this area were extremely rare.

While today money does make its appearance, it is still comparatively scarce. The Mir believes that the coming of money, modernization, and civilization as we know it will only harm his people and he seeks to prevent this, if possible. It is my sincere and humble conviction that the Mir is honest and thinking of his people in his endeavors.

"There is no doubt that the people of Hunza know and enjoy the true thrill of leisure." When I mentioned this to my staff, I was quickly brought to bay by one of my more astute employees who said, "How can that be when they are occupied from dawn till dusk?"

I was caught off balance and I had to reflect a moment and when I reflected, the picture was clear to me. Would a man who has never worked understand what is meant by a holiday? Would the average individual who spends his working days sitting at a desk checking figures, making phone calls and chatting with visitors, understand what leisure is? I contend that in order to know the true joy of leisure one must work and the harder one works, the greater is the enjoyment found in utter relaxation.

Can a man know leisure when after his day's work is

done and he turns on his television set, he is bombarded with commercials that seek to hypnotize his brain by making him believe he needs those products, when in reality he needs them like a hole in the head? Can a man know the meaning of true leisure when his head is throbbing with the bills he must meet on the morrow, the food he must buy and the clothing he must procure for his family, for which in many cases ready money is not available? Can a man who is harassed by and has pressing about him a hundred problems that must be reckoned with, find leisure or peace by escaping to the country for a weekend or by taking to drink?

Of course not! True relaxation and leisure are as far away from him as the moon!

Therefore, when I say that the people of Hunza know and enjoy the true thrill of leisure, I mean every word of it sincerely. While they rise at 3.30 or 4 o'clock in the morning, they go to bed between 7 and 8, and in the winter time even earlier, if there is no celebration or dancing in the village. They are without doubt the most industrious people that I have met—especially in the East. Laziness is positively foreign to Hunza!

Wherever I went I noticed that the Hunzans had ample time to talk and chat, and seldom did they appear to be in a hurry although whenever they walked, their walk was brisk—much more so than the average Western gait. In fact, this is one of their most recognizable and admired traits.

Lest anyone should get the impression that life in Hunza is dull, let me clearly emphasize that there is great fellowship between families and the selfsame group-gathering that we know of in our way of life is also practiced and followed by the people of Hunza. Further, religious gatherings are quite frequent and play an important role in the social life of the people.

CHAPTER 40

Amusements

MUSIC IN HUNZA has been cultivated to a greater degree than many or most other arts and crafts. It is entirely different from the European or Western style of music. Authorities claim that the music of Hunza can be likened to that of the medieval European music.

It is interesting to note that a people so remotely placed away in a small aerie in the mountains, are so fond of music and they have their own types and kinds of instruments which are played by masters at the art.

In Hunza music is not purely for entertainment. It is the essential ritual at all social functions and when the Mir returns from his visits to Altit and other parts of the country, he is greeted by the band playing music specifically prepared and used for such gala functions. Of course at the beginning of every polo match the band plays and plays and plays and continues playing till the end of the match. At every festival music is an

important part of the proceedings.

They have their big feast day just before harvest time and it takes place in the month of Ramadan. At this festival, the musicians set things in motion by starting very early in the morning, and the entire band joins in the sound and the fury. This is followed by dancing and they dance continually, though the same tune is being played over and over and over again in utter monotony. The musicians sit on the floor and make music without pausing, while the dancing goes on in the same way. There are no intermissions or stops.

At this feast the Mir sits on a raised platform in full regalia. He wears a hat made of Persian lamb, the type of hat you've seen policemen wear in the cold climates in the wintertime.

The men invariably dance with their faces turned towards the Mir. No, the women do not dance, strange to relate. They are merely onlookers. They take no part in any of the social functions or in sport or entertainment. Such Hunzan activities are marked by the distinct absence of women. The Mohammedan religion does not allow women to take part in the social life of the community. This, as far as I can ascertain, has no counterpart in any other religion on earth.

Further, women have no rights or privileges.

After learning of these restrictions by the Mohammedan faith, I felt that there would be no mass migration on the part of the women of the West to Hunza.

The harvest dance is very similar to what might be termed a victory dance or a great celebration. The most colorful and interesting dances are the sword dances. The men wear gaily colored costumes that are really very attractive. Their costumes are densely figured and brocaded and the heavy Chinese silks are used as the material. The swords and shields are handmade.

The dancers follow the music and keep time with it. The onlookers, in many cases, keep rhythm with their feet. The dancing and music go on until most of the spectators and the participants eventually leave.

One of their most useful instruments is known as a sitar. It is a wooden stringed instrument very much like our mandolin. Then there is the rebab. It is a much larger stringed instrument and is evidently identical with the Indian's rebab. Then they have their wind instruments, too. The first is the surnai. It is a big clarinet with an unusual, remarkable intensity of sound. Another unusual instrument is the tutek which is but a simple small wooden flute. The third type of wind instrument is the gabi which is a very long transverse flute. Its special use is in plays or music that includes fairies and is used chiefly for the fairies' incantation. Its music is exceedingly sweet sounding and very high pitched. And last but not least are the many kinds of drums. They come in all sizes from tiny ones that can be worn around the neck by a young boy to the big bass boom-boom.

Like all oriental forms of music, the Hunzan band seems to capture the true style so well known to the East . . . pleasing, high pitched sounds but with very little variation. After a little while all of the sounds seem the same and appear to be one repetition after another—most monotonous!

During the summer there is not much social life in the evenings because the people are tired. They work hard all day. But in the winter there is regular dancing and meetings with friends.

I would gather that the people of Hunza don't need sports too badly because life and living in Hunza compels the individual to be active. Thus, he doesn't have to indulge in sports to get exercise.

I do know, however, that tennis is played in Hunza because the Mir has a tennis court in an area around the garden. I also know that swimming is practiced because I saw a swimming pool at the Mir's summer home at Altit.

It was July when I was in Hunza and not one single person did I see swimming in either the Gilgit or Hunza Rivers or, for that matter, in any of the nullahs or creeks we passed.

I will admit that we had our feet soaked in most of them—some deliberately when resting and others in crossing, chiefly on foot because I didn't trust my horse. He has four slender legs with any of which he can get into trouble. I have only two to watch and worry over and they are sturdy and stocky, of the "Pict" type.

It would take a mighty good man or boy to swim in the nullahs in Hunza or the surrounding area: first, because the icy waters of the rivers or nullahs would freeze you to death in no time flat. The water, winter and summer, never gets much higher than the freezing point and I doubt if any human being or even these human polar bears could stand water like that. Besides, there are no clear calm patches that are without a devastating current.

From scrutinizing the area, I doubt very much if there are very many places along the entire reaches of the Hunza River that can be forded, even with mighty good animals, capable of swimming, at least during the spring and summer. I know of one well prepared expedition that tried to cross one of these rivers and came to grief.

Polo is the national game or sport of Hunza and of practically all the principalities in that area . . . and, brother, it is a wild and woolly game as played by these

hardy, mountaineering people.

Some authorities would have us believe that polo as a game had its origin in Tibet, which you can readily see is only a short hop from Hunza. Actually it is right on the border of what was properly old Tibet, but which the Chinese prefer to call Sinkiang. It is also known as Chinese Turkestan.

The word polo is actually a Tibetan word describing or meaning "root of the willow tree," for it was from the dried stumps of the willow tree that polo balls were originally made. The willow wood, from my intimate knowledge of the tree and the wood, would give quite a bit of bounce if made into a ball and that is exactly what was required.

From the best sources that I am able to dig into and locate, it seems that the modern game of polo as we know it throughout the West, originated in Persia. From there it found its way into Turkey and then it was adopted in India, Tibet, China and Japan. In 1869 the British saw it played in the Turkestan-Hunza regions and began to play it in India, where it became the favorite sport of the British army officers. That was well over 100 years ago. In 1869 it was also introduced into England where it caught on very quickly. Then it made its entrance into the United States in 1876.

Here is a strange fact. While many of the characteristics of the game have changed, the selfsame old willow ball is still used and one of the men still gallops down the center of the polo field and strikes the ball off into play. In the Western world it is the umpire who does this. In Hunza, it's still the Mir or some other distinguished personality.

If any of you have had the opportunity of seeing a polo game in action—that is, Western polo—you might even then get the impression that it is a rough, some-

what dangerous game. But if you saw the selfsame sport played without an umpire, and only a score keeper, in Hunza, you'd probably think it the most bloodthirsty game in creation. And who am I to say it is or isn't!

Of course, the British changed the rules and regulations somewhat along the line of the Marquis of Queensbury, and a good thing, too, for our men aren't quite as tough as the Hunzans.

Practically every village in Hunza has a polo team and matches are being arranged continually . . . and the day of a match is really a red letter day for that village. The villagers may not have too much room for orchards and other farming, but they do have polo fields. Invariably the best and flattest piece of land in the area is used as a polo field. So you see, sport, for sport's sake, ranks high among the Hunzans and the Nagirwals as well.

The polo field at Baltit sits just below the old castle on the precipice and rather close to the school and the mosque . . . a sort of towering civic square, if it might be called that. A well-maintained low stone wall surrounds the polo field.

While putting in my attendance at the polo field this day, I recalled that a few days previous I had followed a trail that led down from a cleft in this polo field to visit some of the Hunzan farms.

Above the raised wall, in places, are chairs and seating spaces for the spectators.

Everybody goes to the polo matches. And why not? To these affairs even the women go. And even though their clothes be drab their red, skillfully embroidered Hunzan hats make the spectacle glow with splendor and color.

The Hunzan band is there to do the honors and

they play from the time the game starts until it finishes. I don't know who would be more tired . . . the musicians, the polo players or the excited, active, shouting spectators.

I paced off the field and counted 90 good paces long and 40 wide. This would make it approximately 270 x 120 feet. This is quite a bit smaller in size than the modern polo field which is 300 x 200 feet, and would tend to make the Hunzan sport more hazardous and nerve-racking.

Instead of goal posts they use two large white stones at either end.

The game was started into action by the Mir, in this case, who started off at the further end at a gallop. As he reached the center, he threw the ball high into the air and as it came down he clobbered it and the game—or the mad scramble—was on!

There are 6 players on each team and as the ball is pummeled from one place to another, the screams of the spectators and the players are more frenzied than those heard at a baseball game.

There are no rules—except that the team who scores 9 goals first is the winner, and the game doesn't stop until one of the teams has scored 9 goals. They don't have rest periods; they don't change horses or men; there are no penalties and no fouls. So you can just imagine the carryings-on.

If the ball is struck or bounces off the wall and is caught by one of the players, this permits him to ride through the goal posts and deposit the ball and score a goal . . . if the opposition will let him! Any means can be and usually are undertaken to prevent him from reaching the goal to which he is entitled to proceed. If they're bold enough and strong enough, they can even pull him from his mount.

They seldom ever score 9 goals in less than an hour and many times a game will last half a day. And through all this gleeful yelling and shouting—everybody seems to scream like mad—the band is playing its martial tunes.

When a player scores a goal, he proceeds to pick up the ball and follow the same procedure as the Mir did when he started the action. He races madly down the field, screaming and yelling at the top of his lungs. With the scoring of every goal they change ends; that is, what was the first team's goal now becomes their opponent's goal.

From Gilgit to Altit, whenever I saw someone who had a broken nose or some other definite sign of body injury, I would know even before inquiring, that it was gained in honor on the polo field.

When at last one of the teams scored 9 goals and the game was finished, both teams took part in a dance. The winning team dances first and when they have completed their dance, the losing team do their stint. How they could have the strength and energy required to dance, after hours of unrelenting top-pitch physical activity is more than any Westerner can understand.

The horsemanship displayed at the polo matches beggars that seen at western rodeos. In fact, a Hunzan polo game makes the wildest of rodeos seem almost tame. When it comes to horsemanship, you'd have to go a long way to get anyone to beat these tough, hardy mountaineers.

So furious was the game that I inquired if anyone was ever killed playing polo. The Mir replied that he had never heard of any fatalities from a polo game, but that on many occasions a player was incapacitated. I felt that it would be a good idea if they could build their polo fields close to the hospital at Aliabad!

In discussing the Hunzan game of polo with some friends, when they heard me mention the fact that the best and largest piece of flat land was used for a polo field, they said, "Now, John, this is very contradictory. You claim they are intelligent people and every bit of arable land is needed and used for cultivation and now you tell me that the best piece of land and the largest level space is used for a polo field!"

My reply was, "What I've told you is absolutely true, but sometimes there are considerations involved which neither you nor I nor others in the Western world understand. For example, could we ever explain to the people of Hunza why we rush, swish, hurry and risk our necks driving down the highways, actually risking life and limb—not only our own, but countless others—only to get to our destination . . . and there do nothing!

"Or there is another example that may be even better. A man in America strives all his life to achieve the means of acquiring a home with all modern conveniences and comforts, including every electrically operated appliance or gadget devised to save time and effort. Then when this victory is achieved, he tries to get enough money to buy a summer cottage way up north. There he parks his family for the summer. Then over every weekend he drives hundreds of miles to get there and when he gets there what has he got? Outdoor plumbing, no hot water, no garbage disposal, no electricity—using a lamp or even a candle for light and carrying every bucket of water in from the lake or the creek. You just try to explain that to a Hunzan. There is no more rhyme and reason in one than there is in the other. But who am I to judge?"

It is a positive fact that the men in Hunza do beat their wives. I checked and double checked on this rather important question. The Mir told me he knew

of only one case where a man excessively and unjustly administered thrashings on his spouse. In all other instances the men are not punished or sent to prison for it. If a wife doesn't do as her husband commands, he beats her. If she were too generous in giving away her husband's property to her parents, he would also beat her. If she is unfaithful to him and he catches her, he has a right to kill both her and her seducer.

This seems to have an excellent effect in maintaining a high standard of loyalty. I am not sure as to how the people of the West will regard the people of Hunza for the light I have shed here, but whatever your judgment and opinion, I have laid the facts before you.

CHAPTER 41

Cleanliness

ON VARIOUS OCCASIONS I have read and heard reports that the Hunzan homes are scrupulously clean. To that I will not subscribe. I just can't go along with any such assertion.

I peeked into, looked over at and viewed hundreds of the homes in Nagir on the trek and I also had a chance to see into many of the homes in Hunza and there isn't any question about it—the Hunzan homes are cleaner, tidier and have fewer odors (or none at all) than the others of this same area. But to say that they are scrupulously clean or that you could eat off the floor is, to my mode of thought, a gross exaggeration.

Obviously, the places the other writers saw were very clean and tidy. But, to me anyway, it is clear that the owners were notified in advance that they would have visitors.

Being curious and nosy by habit and turn of mind, I

managed to peer into a few of the places and noticed that they weren't as spic and span as some people say they are. In fact, we were taken through one home on a tour. We visited their downstairs apartment and then climbed the ladder to visit the upstairs one. I will admit and am in complete agreement with the other writers, that the place was scrupulously clean, swept and neat.

But—and this is important, so follow me—I had stuck my head and eyes into that selfsame home the day before, probably unknown to my guide, and had seen the condition that this same house was in then. While it was not filthy, nor could I even say dirty, it certainly was not in the same immaculate condition that it was in now, since this time the people were advised that we were coming.

So let it be said and accepted that the Hunzans are much cleaner than the Nagirwals and are generally, by and large, a clean, wholesome people, both in body and in home.

I have long ago accepted the clear-cut situation that hygiene and cleanliness are strictly matters of habit, custom and necessity and these factors vary from country to country. For example, the standard of cleanliness in Switzerland is quite different to that of neighboring France. And in Italy, especially in the southern part, it bears no resemblance to that practiced in either France or Switzerland. Then in England the standard changes again and when you get to America, well, there again it is so different that one would believe it was a different world.

Undoubtedly, the people of Hunza in their hygienic habits are far above those of India or Pakistan. I am here referring to the mass level, of course. Then, too, the Hunzan habits were far better [redacted] in Italy.

The house of the average Hunzan farmer was not quite as good as the average European house. In my opinion, Hunzan cleanliness is as good as is desirable when all matters are considered.

Cleanliness as we know it in the West is neither desirable nor is it a necessity in a country like Hunza. To begin with, they have more important duties to perform than doing a lot of unnecessary housekeeping. Usually in the West, the man earns the wherewithal to sustain the home and the woman looks after the cooking, housekeeping and the rearing of the children. In Hunza the father, the mother and the children, as soon as they are old enough to know what to do, take part in the work. You see, it is practically a full time job for the entire family during the spring and summer to procure sufficient food to last throughout the year.

Therefore it is neither desirable nor necessary for a Hunzan wife to have a lot of furniture and other things that would require work and attention in her home.

If you are trying to compare the cleanliness of the average American city or town person's home with that of the Hunzan homes, then you are miles and miles away from reality, because very, very few people of the world—especially those in the more or less underprivileged countries or in remote districts—live in homes that are in any way comparable to the average city home in America.

In the locality where I live, the Niagara District, the choicest locations along the lake front are selected for subdivision sites and beautiful spacious homes with fine grounds are created. That may be all well and good in America, where rich arable land is readily available, but in Hunza, remember, every bit of land that they own and use for growing their life-giving crops ha[redacted] from the rocks of the mountain-

sides. Few, if any, Hunza homes are ever built where the land can be tilled. Usually the site that is selected for a home is part of a rocky promontory or some other location where the land could not be used for crops. They just can't afford to use a piece of tillable soil for a homesite.

The houses or homes are usually built of stones or rocks. No cement or any other binding compound is used. Yet the homes seem sturdy enough to stand most anything. I also saw some that were built of clay.

The lower floor of the Hunzan house is usually divided into two sections. One section has either no roof over it or just a part roof or covering and there is an opening in the wall, but no door. This is where the animals are kept. The Hunzan pasture and forage supply doesn't allow for the larger beasts. The cattle of Hunza are the diminutive kind, bred and selected for their dwarfishness, so that they will require less feeding, but still yield an abundant udderful of rich milk. This applies to goats, sheep and cows. The partial covering over the courtyard is so that the animals will have some form of protection overhead.

Then beside this is the house proper, probably half again as large . . . maybe 12 or 14 feet square.

The Hunzan farmer steps from his home into the stable, so to speak. This, of course, would horrify the people of America but it is not to be regarded as a sort of calamity, as utter degradation, or as a matter of filth and ill health, because this system is practiced in most other parts of the world even at the present time.

The Hunzans, being Mohammedans, do not raise pigs. Therefore they don't have the conditions that pigs would create.

I'm sure that I visited many of these courtyards and

I don't think I was struck by any unpleasant or bad odors. No doubt you would assume that being a farmer, the excrement of animals wouldn't offend me and in saying that you'd be very, very right, but even with a city man's view, I don't think you would have found the Hunzan barnyards smelly or dirty.

The roof of the living quarters is just high enough so that a tall man can stand up in it without bumping his head. The Hunzan roofs usually have heavy timbers strung across—at least 3 inches thick and placed about 12 inches apart. They have to be that thick and heavy because on top of this is laid earth. Practically every home has an earthen roof. The floor, too, is of hard earth that has been pounded through years of use, until it is a good sound firm floor that can be readily swept and kept clean.

Apart from the Mir's palace, every other home that I visited in Hunza and in Nagir had earthen floors. Now naturally one wouldn't expect an earthen floor to be spic and span or shine and glisten the way a good hardwood floor can be made to shine and glisten. These earthen or clay floors can be made smooth and even be polished, and it is actually done.

Often the room is divided off to allow for a storage room, where the dried apricot stones and other fruits and vegetables are kept for winter use.

In the center of the room a hole is dug and often stones are laid at the bottom. Here the fire is laid and this is how they keep warm during the winter and where they do their cooking. Above is a hole about 18 inches square to allow the smoke to escape. The people sleep on the floor within warming distance of the fire. Beds in the average Hunzan homes are unknown, but they have bed rolls or other cloth contraptions to make the floor softer. Some of the wealthier or well-to-do

Hunzans have charpoys. Most homes have a chest, or two or three or more, in which they store and keep their belongings. The chests are used to sit on and perhaps eat off. The Hunzan home we visited had a table also.

Every Hunzan home has blankets for covering during the winter and these blankets are made of homespun wool which is carded, loomed and woven by the villagers. They are equal in weight and warmth to the best blankets that are made in the West. There is no danger of the blankets not being 100 per cent wool, because wool they can get from the sheep or yak's backs.

Practically every Hunzan home has an upstairs, too, and this is where the family lives during the summer. It is related that each spring on the 21st of March the family moves upstairs. When there are 4 or 5 members in the family the upstairs is usually divided into two sections or rooms, leaving an open balcony in the center.

The usual Hunzan home is a place to shelter the family against storms, rain, cold and snow. It is not used nearly as much for social intercourse as it is in the West. Therefore, they don't spend as much of their time in the homes. Practically all daylight hours during spring, summer and fall are spent in the fields.

Some authorities attribute the good health of the Hunzans to the fact that most of their time is spent out in the open air and sunlight. Could it be that we in the West spend too much of our time inside our comfortable homes and not sufficient outside in the glorious outdoors? This is something worthy of thought and study.

Considering the heights, the ledges, the precipices and steep inclines that are found throughout this country, it is remarkable that there are few cases of injury like broken or fractured limbs, serious accidents due to falling and such. But you must remember that from infancy, children are trained and learn how to

stay aloft. Heights offer no terror for any Hunzan—man, woman or child. I think if a Hunzan suffered injury because of a fall from a height, he would be ashamed and embarrassed, but let me admit that they do have falls and broken limbs, too. I found this out when I met Hunzans who were expert bone-setters.

I have to admit that generally speaking the Hunzans' clothes are nondescript. However, I was strongly attracted to the Hunza hat which is best described as a rolled, sausage brimmed, soft white woolen covering. But it is really and truly an ingenious contraption. It is made of native homespun wool, white or creamy in color and mighty good wool, it is, in my opinion.

These hats are worn summer and winter by the boys and men. I tried them and found that they did keep out the summer heat. Wherever I met the boys and men of Hunza they always wore these hats. In the winter they can be rolled down to cover not only their ears but their faces and necks as well. I attest that it is a valuable and completely satisfactory headpiece. I thought they were quite attractive and enhanced the handsomest of the Hunzan men.

They have the choga which is a long flowing cloak worn by both men and women during the winter. This cloak is made of the same grey homespun wool and is never dyed but its creamy color is attractive and pleasing to the eye. Evidently this choga is quite similar to the toga worn by the ancient Romans. Who knows? Maybe some of Alexander's men or Alexander himself brought a toga with him from his homeland when he came to the East.

Apart from the attractive, useful, comfortable, Hunzan sausage-brimmed hat and choga, the best I can say for the rest of the clothes worn by the people of Hunza is that they are utilitarian.

CHAPTER 42

Government

I DON'T KNOW whether to describe the mode of government of Hunza as being complex or simple. The language of the people of Hunza is Burushaski and this language is totally unwritten. Therefore, they have no written code of laws.

The first dictionary of the Burushaski language was written by Colonel David Lorimer in 1935 and at the present time Doctor Hermann Berger, a German language professor, a specialist in Sanskrit, is seeking to write another and perhaps a more thorough and complete dictionary of that language.

I recall in Chalt, while I was enjoying the company of Professor Berger, he showed me a set of books that was published in Norway in 1935. They were Colonel David Lorimer's dictionary of the Burushaski language.

In my estimation Dr. Berger's work should be a masterpiece, because never in my life have I seen any

human being take to a task so assiduously and with so much profound love and feeling. I don't know when it's going to be published or by whom, but I'll certainly make sure to get a set or a copy of the volumes, even if they are printed in German.

The word "Burushaski" is pronounced almost as it is written, except there is a "u" sound in the last syllable rather than an "a" sound. My reaction was to spell the word "uski" and all through the writing of my manuscript that was the way I spelled it, but as I found every other source, with one exception besides myself, spelled it "aski" I had to admit defeat and also use that spelling. The spelling of "uski" was used by the Mir and his grandfather in his book. I still think it sounds like "uski" rather than "aski". Dr. Berger agreed with me that it did sound like "uski" but he felt that for the sake of uniformity, it would be better if I, too, used the "aski".

Nevertheless, though their code of laws remains unwritten, justice does not seem to suffer. The people of Hunza are well acquainted with the laws in vogue. I believe it was Napoleon who said that a nation that has many laws has a lawless people. Perhaps because the Hunzans do not have many laws, they are law-abiding.

Until the partition of Pakistan from India, Hunza was a part of India or, at least, it was definitely included on the map as Indian territory. But there is nothing in Hunza to indicate that they obeyed, owed or acknowledged sovereignty to India.

The Mir was and is the absolute ruler. He supposedly has the power of life and death over all his subjects. I know this power has never been used or abused by the present Mir, who came to the throne in 1945 at the death of his father who ruled but 8 years. Very little is said or recorded about his father's tenure in office.

Therefore, I assume that it was an unimportant or uneventful period or, maybe for other reasons, they don't want to say very much about it. However, his grandfather, Sir Mohomed Nazim Khan, has been famed both in fact and fiction and was well educated. He left an autobiography, and I am the owner of a copy of it, which was given to me by the present Mir.

Today Hunza is a part of Pakistan but again, I could see no Pakistani influence in the country, although quite a few of the Hunzan citizens serve in the Pakistani army. But when the Hunzan men and boys return on furlough or after finishing their term of service in the Pakistani army, they take off the uniform and dress in typical Hunzan garb.

The Mir is still the absolute monarch of the country. Just what part the Pakistani government takes in his government I do not know, but to all intents and purposes, Hunza is ruled and governed by the Mir.

From the most reliable sources that I could contact and glean information from, I learned that Hunza is even today considered an independent state. Hunza and Nagir, its neighbor on the other side of the Hunza River, are said to be the only two remaining independent states in Pakistan, in spite of the fact that, by agreement, the Pakistani government looks after and takes charge of their foreign policy.

Apart from the fact that they use the Pakistani rupee, and even then only a few of them appear, there seems to be no other Pakistani influence in either Nagir or Hunza.

Pakistani postage is also used in Hunza. The mail is brought in and sorted twice a week. All of the Mir's letters that I have received bear Pakistani airmail postage and they are postmarked "Experimental P.O." I doubt if anyone but the Mir gets any mail, with the

exception of the doctor or visitors. There was a letter from my office awaiting me when I reached the Mir's palace. The Mir told me about it right after our first greeting. He was understanding enough to realize I would be happy to hear from home.

I guess many of the things about Hunza wouldn't allow the country to come under the heading of a democracy, but from what I saw of life and living in Hunza, I assure you it is more of a democracy than any other democracy in existence today.

Hunza has no policemen, no soldiers, no bureaucracy, no customs officers or immigration officers. They do have the Mir who is the ruler and true head of the state and the Mir appoints the Wazir who is his right hand man and acts as judge.

All major squabbles and disputes are handled by the Mir. He holds court regularly and makes the decisions and his word is law and cannot be challenged or contested by anyone. Minor cases are looked after and into and tried by the Wazir.

Hunza does not have a jail. There is no lockup whatsoever. If and when a crime is committed, the criminal or culprit is banished to a place called Shimshal. At Shimshal the criminal or guilty person is not confined or jailed. He just has to live in that rugged place, where living is grim. The altitude is somewhere around 12,000 or 13,000 feet, and eking an existence out of the land there is most difficult and precarious. Actually the form of punishment is a sort of ostracism.

Evidently the threat of being sentenced to live in Shimshal is a great deterrent, because few crimes are committed. There have only been two instances in the last ten years where serious crimes have occurred. In one instance it was a youth who had posted indecent signs on trees and other places. He was hailed before

the Wazir and given a stern warning and that ended that!

Another case occurred about 10 years ago when the Wazir's son became involved with a young man and girl. In this case the boy and girl (for that is what they were, rather than young man and woman) were misbehaving in the area adjacent to the Wazir's home. An argument was started when they were asked to leave the premises. The young man became unruly, then offensive and he said many unkind and indecent things. The Wazir's son warned him to move on and behave himself, but the young man refused to listen and persisted in his actions. The Wazir's son went into his home, got a gun, and said to him, "Now move away from here or I'll shoot you!"

But still the young hoodlum refused to listen or be warned. So the Wazir's son shot him. At the trial he claimed that he did not know the gun was loaded and he just made the threat in an effort to frighten the lad and make him go about his business. The boy died and the Wazir's son was charged with murder, and for this he was banished to Shimshal for 10 years.

A short time later the dead boy's parents appeared before the Mir and begged him to remit the sentence to the Wazir's son, as they claimed they believed him and that he did not intend to shoot their son. Besides, their son had provoked the attack. After he had been in Shimshal for two years, the Mir had him brought back and as the matter stands at the present moment in Hunza, this lad is now the Wazir.

In the olden days, a form of punishment in Hunza that was administered on instructions from the Mir was to immerse the culprit in the cold waters of the Hunza River. A 15-minute immersion in these icy waters was tantamount to a death sentence.

Here are some interesting quotations from Sir Mohomed Nazim Khan's autobiography . . . .

"During my thirty-nine years as Mir there have been two murders only in my country and all the people have been happy and prosperous. The Government of India had never interfered with the internal administration of the country and as my people see more of the world they have added cleverness to their previous simplicity.

"There is not enough land for the growing population and so I encourage my people to go out into the world and get work in other places. . . .

"There are four clans in Hunza and in each village there are appointed four 'Makaddams' (men of good family who settle any little disputes that may arise.) If they consider a crime is too serious for them to settle they refer it to the Trangfas and they, in turn to the Mir's court which is ever open and from sentence of which there is no appeal.

"If it is considered that a death sentence is called for, the people are collected and if any one will speak up for the culprit, his sentence is remitted. Otherwise he is executed in the presence of the people.

"In the former times if anyone committed adultery, his house could be destroyed, his animals slaughtered and his trees felled without any trouble falling on the offenders and though that custom has fallen into desuetude, it is still considered right for a man to kill his wife's lover if he can catch them 'flagrante delicto'!

"Marriage is not allowed between near relations and whenever possible, people marry into a clan different from their own. Child marriage is discouraged and tribal customs have been moulded to conform to modern ideas since I became Mir. . . .

"In former years Shimshal was used as a place to

which people were exiled and as officers were continually asking me what sort of place it was, I determined to go there and see for myself. The track there was very bad indeed and in two places there were goat hair bridges which were very unpleasant to cross. A ring of wood was used and the traveler was drawn from one bank to the other and if he wore a beard most of the hairs were dragged out on the way. . . .

"My father had six wives, three of which were of the ruling classes and three from the Zemindaris. All however, were married to him according to the law and so he left behind no bastards."

The Mir told me that of late some of the young boys have taken to smoking cigarettes. This they have picked up and learned from the Hunzan men who have been serving in the Pakistani army. Cigarettes can be purchased in the shop in Baltit and a few occasions of petty theft have been encountered. In each case it seems that they stole in order to get money to buy cigarettes. These few petty crimes of course did not involve ostracism to Shimshal. It is expected that this condition will continue or even become aggravated as the youth of Hunza become more familiar and acquainted with smoking. Some of the men in Hunza smoke the "hookah" which we know as the water-pipe.

Some forms and varieties of tobacco have been tried in Hunza. I promised to send the Mir seeds of the various types of tobacco that we grow in America, such as Virginia, Burley and Quesnel. Perhaps if they can learn to grow tobacco, it will enable the youth to get their hands on some tobacco and satisfy their craving for it without resorting to other ways and means. However, they would have to get paper from somewhere for none is made or improvised in Hunza.

It is obvious from what I have seen, that crime and

misdemeanors on the scale that we know them in the Western world are practically unknown in Hunza. That being the case, it behooves us to investigate and study family life in Hunza, for juvenile delinquency is becoming a very serious and ever broadening problem in America.

I saw samples of Hunzan justice. Its simplicity made me weep . . . when I recalled our procrastinating, shackled, unwieldy, judicial system. In the Western world civil cases take months and even years to be heard in court before a judge. In Hunza there are so few cases of wrongdoings, or even individual or family problems, that a hearing can be arranged almost immediately.

Petty squabbles or differences between husband and wife or even other disputes can be brought before the Wazir or before the Mir in private. When something more serious is at stake, the grieved party or parties bring their case to the "morning durbar," which is held regularly in the courtyard surrounded by the beautiful gardens at the entrance to the Mir's palace. At the time I was at Baltit many workmen were busily engaged in erecting a large stone enclosure or balcony where the "durbars" will be held, allowing more room for spectators and greater comfort for the counsel.

During the proceedings the Mir sits comfortably ensconced on a square-shaped wooden divan, luxuriantly smothered in rugs, fancy cushions and tapestries. There is none of the strict court procedure or dourness and frigidity known to our Western judiciary system. Here one feels that he is talking to a friend—a fellow citizen—or at least, an acquaintance.

Perhaps we have carried our ideas of justice, freedom and democracy a bit too far. In order that everyone may be afforded justice and fair treatment at the hands

of his fellow man and see that it is fairly and impartially carried out, we have made it too complicated. Is there any justifiable reason why it should take months or even years for a civil case to be heard in court? If there are not sufficient judges, I'm sure it would not be difficult to appoint or elect more of them. If there are not enough court rooms and court houses, I feel confident that, with American construction at its high peak of efficiency, it wouldn't take long to correct that.

Then why isn't it done? I don't know the answer. Do you? The Hunzan system of justice seems to be functioning in a most satisfactory manner. Anyone may petition the Mir and unless he is away, can get an almost immediate hearing. If the Mir is not available or if the problem is not a weighty one, then the Wazir can attend to it.

In truth, justice can be simple!

* * * * *

In order to get into Hunza you must obtain a permit from the Pakistani authorities in the capital, which is Karachi, but I understand the government is being moved from Karachi to Rawalpindi or a new site close to it. I still think it is more important to have the Mir's invitation, because even though you could get into Hunza, you would be practically helpless without the Mir's assistance and cooperation.

Unless you brought a guide with you and one who could speak English and translate for you, you'd find the going very, very difficult in either Nagir or Hunza. Therefore I would suggest that if you contemplate a visit into this area, you obtain the Mir's invitation or permission first. Then go after the Pakistani government's permit.

Why the Pakistan government regards Hunza as a strategic region or area is not hard to understand if

you realize that Hunza's neighbors are Afghanistan, China and India and slightly above a narrow corridor of Afghanistan there is Russia, just a scant few miles from the Hunzan border.

Therefore, any person who wanted to start trouble with either Russia or China could get into the Hunza area and it wouldn't take too much maneuvering to cause an international incident, especially if the Chinese or Russians were looking for an excuse. So I don't blame the Pakistani government for being cautious and realistic about those possibilities.

Just a few years ago an American scientist working with funds raised by an organization started for that purpose, known as the Central Asiatic Research Foundation, wanted to take a couple of the Hunzan boys to the United States and have them educated there and then brought back again to Hunza. At first the Mir flatly refused. Then after reconsidering the matter, and perhaps in consultation with others, he changed his mind and gave his permission. I did not inquire as to the exact rhyme and reason for the developments that took place, but eventually the Pakistani government decisively and definitely refused to allow the boys out of the country.

It appeared to me that the Mir felt that there was no reason why he should refuse when the foreign policy of his country was being looked after in Karachi. I am more than certain that the Mir's opinion was recorded in Karachi.

But John Clark, the writer of a book about Hunza, and some American authorities were very annoyed at this and felt that the Mir was being unreasonable, ungenerous and to say the least, unkind in not allowing these boys to come to America.

I did not know then the true reasons behind the Mir's

refusal and what other intrigues were involved, and when I questioned him about this and he explained, I realized that he had acted wisely—and so will you.

"If I allowed those boys to go to America to be educated and then come back to Hunza in a few years, both the Chinese and Russians could say that I sent them to America to be brainwashed, filled with propaganda or trained in subversive capitalistic activities.

"Well, I'm not giving Russia or China any excuses. We are a peace-loving people, we get along with the Chinese and the Russians, we mind our own business and we intend to stay free of entanglements and embroilments, if humanly possible.

"They said that I had refused to let the boys go because I was afraid that when they came back they would teach the people the American way, and that would undermine my rule and to a degree that is true, because I think my people are the happiest and healthiest in the world, and that is more than any other nation can claim. So I would like to keep them that way, if possible.

"But I'm not afraid of my people becoming educated because we do everything within our limited powers to further their education now and have done so for some years."

This statement I found to be absolutely true. The Hunzans by and large are the best learned people of that or any other area in India or Pakistan. Please don't misunderstand. I don't mean that there are no better educated individuals in these two countries because that is not so. I mean that there are few places in Pakistan or India where all of the male citizens are afforded the opportunity of getting an education without cost. That is true in Hunza.

These schools that I saw seemed to be comparable

to the average little red school house in the West. The one in Baltit was quite a bit better and as good as any of our schools of 25 years ago . . . which I would say was mighty fine going for a far off place like Hunza.

Then I asked the Mir what had happened to John Clark's woodworking school and he told me, with calm deliberation, that he knew and felt that Mr. Clark was an earnest, honest man with the best of intentions. . . . "But, how could he," went on the Mir, "hope to improve the economy of our little country by means of a woodworking school and the training of our men in woodcraft when we do not have the required wood? We can't cut down our apricot trees, which are our very life, in order to get wood to use in making things that we could export to the United States!"

Then I recalled from Mr. Clark's book that he did have great difficulty in locating suitable lumber for his school.

From what I have read and learned on the scene about Clark's work, I know he was a man of high caliber and integrity and did a mighty good job with the boys, but for some strange reason there is an unusual silence about his work and his efforts. I could neither understand nor explain it. I'm still trying to get the true impression of the people concerning this matter.

At this point I want to emphasize that I am not seeking to pick a battle with anyone, but from my travels back and forth and around the Hunzan territory, it is fantastic to believe that there could ever be sufficient timber to make it worthwhile to run a woodworking school, especially to make woodcraft for export purposes.

Stonecraft, yes—for stones, even including some of the more precious and rare types, could without doubt be found in Hunza or at least in the mountains close

by. And if they were taught to make useful jewels and do other types of work with rock, then they would have something, because the supply is absolutely unlimited.

I agree wholeheartedly with the Mir that the thought of making a worthwhile contribution to the people of Hunza by opening a woodcraft school is utter nonsense.

CHAPTER 43

The Happy Hunzans

My Chief Objective in going to Hunza was to try, first, to find out if the people of Hunza were as healthy and as long lived as many writers and reports claim them to be.

Secondly, if they were the healthy specimens of mankind that the writers said, then I wanted to find out how this came about!

I don't claim to have any special perceptive powers, but the moment I arrived in Gilgit, I resolved that all of my faculties would be centered on observing the why's and wherefore's bearing on the health of these people.

I didn't have to be a very keen observer to realize quickly that in Gilgit the Hunzan aura of health did not hold. But remember, that was in Gilgit.

Gilgit reminded me very much of the typical frontier towns as we knew them in America, except Gilgit

didn't just spring up overnight. By the appearance of the stone and mud houses, as well as all other features about the city, it was obvious that the city had been there for a long, long time.

Gilgit is indeed a strange city. It is one of these places that is right in the middle of nowhere, but to that mountain-harnessed area, Gilgit is a mighty important, strategic spot. Somehow I had the feeling that if there was a place called the "crossroads of the East" Gilgit had the sole right to the appellation, for through Gilgit would pass caravans from China, as well as travelers from Russia, Afghanistan, Persia, India, Pakistan and yes, undoubtedly from all other parts of the Eastern world.

While I did see quite a bit of the city and the surrounding country, I regret today that I didn't dig a little deeper and get about even more. I think Gilgit has many interesting stories to tell . . . how could it be otherwise? And if I ever go back (and I intend to) I would like to be the one who brings these tales to light!

The Gilgitis, from a health standpoint or from appearance in general, did not impress me one bit. The people were somewhat similar to what you would find or expect in Pakistan or India. However, the moment I crossed the bridge over the Gilgit River and got into the hills, I resolved to concentrate, coldly and with deliberate calculation, on every individual we met. So many confusing and contradicting statements had been made about the people of Hunza, that I was firmly resolved that if study and scrutinization and observation would do the trick, then I would find out the truth.

Akbar was keeping pace with Cecil most of the time, while Sherin was with me, and I questioned him closely about every person that we happened to meet or pass. I had no trouble—none whatsoever—in spotting a Hun-

zan. And it wasn't because I was smart. There obviously was a distinct difference and anyone could pick out a Hunzan from a Nagirwal or any of the other citizens thereabout.

Much has been said about the walking habits of the people of Hunza . . . the long distances, the climbs, their endurance and their sprightly gait. I have had little experience with their endurance, but of their gait I can speak with some degree of authority. They have the lightest, easiest walk or pace that I have seen anywhere in my life. They seem to glide or spring effortlessly. If any people on the face of the earth have learned to walk without wasting any energy, I believe the people of Hunza have learned that secret. That's the only way I can account for our guides, for example, being in exactly the same condition when they finished their day's travel as when they started. I fully realize that they are accustomed to doing this. On occasions at home I have walked 12 miles at one march—and enjoyed it—but I was tired and mighty glad to take a good rest when I reached my goal.

I cannot recall one occasion where I saw a Hunzan resting after a walk. I practically retraced every foot of my journey back and forth and also the side excursions, but I couldn't find one occasion on which the Hunzan men had to rest. They not only seemed, but actually were, totally imperturbable, nonchalant and at ease wherever they went. Their stride was livelier and lighter than anything I have ever seen.

Furthermore they never slouched, whether walking, standing or sitting. No matter where you saw them, they held their heads erect and chests out.

Now this is not an afterthought because I began my search and observations the moment I left Gilgit. They didn't walk—they seemed to float! I wish I knew their

secret . . . but perhaps it isn't a secret! It's most likely inherent—they have it when they're born.

The closest thing to the Hunzan gait that I ever saw was in Agra where the famed Taj Mahal is located. There were a couple of hours unfilled in our time schedule, so we took a stroll through the city. What a city! (But that is another story.) My eyes were rolling like a man in a delirium to take in all of the scenes that were going on about me. When I heard what sounded like a song or a chant, I turned about trying to find the source of the merriment or music, and then I saw the source. I stood and waited and a troop of men passed by in front of me, single file and spread about 10 feet apart. Most of them wore but a loin cloth; the day was hot and sunny. On their shoulders they carried a wooden yoke, that stretched out on either side about a foot from their shoulders. From each end there hung a string and at the end of the string was a platter. The entire affair resembled a balance—the kind that justice is supposed to bear. On each of the platters stood a bottle with a fluid in it. The gait of these men was light, flowing and even; the men were all singing.

I stood and watched them file past me. There were about 70 of them. I looked about me, searching for someone who could explain these goings-on. A few inquiries led me to a native lady of the upper caste who spoke fluent English. She told me that these men had been to the Ganges 60 miles away and they were carrying holy water in the glass containers that were placed on the balanced platters. Their load could not be put down until they reached their destination. They had already gone 60 miles and some had a mile or two more to go and others had 10 miles and some even 50 more miles. They could transfer their load to some other willing helper, but it must not touch the ground.

These men were carrying water from the holy of holies—the Ganges. They were intoxicated—not with wine, but with their faith. They were excited with the mysticism of their god; they were inspired; they were in seventh heaven. Yes, the gait of these divinely influenced people was close to the pace followed by the people of Hunza.

If I had seen somewhere along in my travels a Hunzan who slouched, dragged himself or in some other way showed a sign of weakness or debility, I would say so, but no such Hunzan did I see.

I fully realize that I scoffed at my Hunzan bearer that the Mir sent along with me from Kerimabad to Nomal, especially when he wanted to take the horses back from Chalt and leave us because he said he had blisters on his feet, due to the exceptionally hard push we had made that day, but remember, he was 20 years older than I! His feet probably told his age but he certainly didn't look it.

If there are sick and infirm men in Hunza, they must be exceptionally well-hidden, because I didn't see or find any.

Then, too, writers and observers of the people of Hunza always mention and stress the fact that they are a happy pleasant people. To this I must also assent. I did not see a sad or disgruntled Hunzan. I do not mean to suggest that they ran about the streets giggling and laughing, but they were of cheery, amiable countenance. Here I am going beyond those with whom I walked and talked and ate; I am delving into the citizenry that I passed on the roads or streets, those whose farms and homes we visited and also those whom I observed in passing.

Let me here illustrate another point. For example, it is understandable that we here in America, or people

in other countries distant from Hunza, would attach an aura of mystery or superhumanness to the people of Hunza, but the truth of the matter is that even in Pakistan the belief or the tale concerning the superiority of the Hunzan people also exists. In Karachi, when I mentioned I was going to Hunza or seeking to go to Hunza, ears pricked up quickly. They were interested, they were intrigued, for they knew and had heard tales of the prowess of the Hunzans.

A few weeks before I left home I learned that there was a Pakistani boy employed in Niagara-on-the-Lake and I made an attempt to contact him. My wife just about that time met the Pakistani lad and his wife at a social function and she told him that I wanted to see him and talk to him about Pakistan and about the people of Hunza. Then, when he heard that I intended to go to Hunza, he excitedly informed my wife and stressed that she be sure to tell me not to go because the roads in the mountains were terribly dangerous, that one could penetrate into that country only at the greatest of risk and danger and that many people had set out for Hunza and never been heard of again.

When my wife brought this tale to me, I was perturbed. I was worried and my wife was even more concerned. If a native of Pakistan, and not an illiterate, I want to remind you (this man was a technician), held these people in such awe and fear, you can see that the myth about the people of Hunza is universal.

It is further claimed that the people of Hunza have endurance that is unsurpassed by any other people on earth. I believe it was Eric Shipton, the famous mountain explorer, who said that the Hunzans had more endurance than even the Sherpa guides that are found on the borders of Nepal and Tibet. These Sherpas have long been considered the people with the greatest en-

durance and stamina known anywhere, and if Shipton says that the Hunzans had more endurance and stamina than these people, no higher tribute can be given.

It is my humble opinion that too much has been written about the people of Hunza by people who have never been there and know little or nothing about the actual conditions that prevail in that country. Then, too, many visitors spent most of their time taking pictures, viewing the scenery and dining at the Mir's and didn't pay much attention or learn anything about the actual living conditions of the people.

The people of Hunza have not in the least benefited by the visitors that have reached Hunza, and if future visits are discouraged, I believe there would be good cause for it.

Most of the diseases known to civilization are unknown in Hunza. I do not ask you to take my word for it but that is my report from consulting the resident doctor in Hunza, as well as a German woman doctor who visited Hunza.

It is further true that the Mir's wife, the Rani of Hunza, had her appendix removed and she took a trip to Rawalpindi to have it done. But in the first place she does not live according to Hunza standards and besides, it was probably stylish to have an appendix operation. On the other hand, if a good surgeon were let loose in Hunza for a few weeks, there's no doubt about it, he'd have hundreds of appendixes removed before he could be stopped.

Another important point that I wish to make at this time is that I paid my own way to and from Hunza. I had no financial backing. Therefore I am not committed to aid anyone or any product or radio station or newspaper. I have no one to fear and no one to please. I can afford to tell the truth.

I do not intend to set the Hunzans down as a pattern or an example of how we should live because it just couldn't be done. However, unless you are stone deaf, blind and dumb, you can't help but realize that there is something drastically wrong with our way of life and living. That is why so many eyes and ears are being trained on Hunza. We hope, we pray that they have the answer.

There has been an awakening and it is growing throughout America. People are seeking health today more than they ever did in the history of mankind. But even with all the enlightenment available, they're still groping . . . they don't know where or how to find it, and the pity of it is that it is really so simple.

Too long already have we left our health and well being in the hands of doctors and surgeons and other types of healers, without going to the proper source—oneself and one's food. You forget that doctors, nurses, trained technicians and hospitals and other similar institutions are there to try to cure, not to prevent or advise. There is just no profit for anyone in propounding or teaching the simple, natural method that can keep everyone in good health. After all, a large share of our entire economy is now built around medicine, medical provisions and medical institutions. No one—not even the heads of our governments—would risk the shock that would be felt throughout the country if this gigantic, needless, useless structure were to be abandoned as it truly should be.

From what I have seen, from what I have heard and from what I have learned, I have reached this definite conclusion: no one single factor can be held up as the reason for the splendid health of the people of Hunza.

CHAPTER 44

Health

FOR ME TO SAY that the Hunzans are the healthiest people of the world, which many authors and writers have claimed, would be sheer effrontery . . . mainly because I have not studied the health of all the peoples of the world, nor have I even met them. However, I do attest from what I have seen and observed, that the Hunzans are one of the healthiest people of the world.

To say that they are completely free from diseases or health problems is definitely not true. At the time when I visited Hunza there was a resident doctor located at Aliabad, where he was in charge of a 10-bed hospital. I conversed with him and questioned him daily during my stay and he answered my pressing questions with complete frankness and candor.

He is only a young man, a Pakistani, and his name is Dr. Mohammed Yusuf Khan, M.B., B.S. He is a handsome, capable, well educated doctor and is, in my

humble opinion, equal to the best medical men that we can turn out of the European or American universities. Besides his medical degree, he also has a bachelor of science degree which most of our doctors do not have. So if anything, he is perhaps a little bit better learned than our average physician.

One of the first questions that I asked of the Mir of Hunza was, "Are there many known epileptics?"

The Mir thought for a moment and then shook his head and said, "No!"

So I turned to the doctor who was on my left and said, "Doctor, do you know of any epileptics in Hunza?"

At that instant the Mir got up and left the room . . . and I wondered about this.

There was a definite purpose behind my question concerning epilepsy. You see, it has always been my conviction—or at least for 25 years—that epilepsy is strictly nutritional. Of the few epileptics that I knew in my life all had peculiar eating habits . . . that is, they had their positive likes and dislikes . . . and from that day to this I have believed that epilepsy was basically nutritional.

"Yes," the doctor replied, "right at this present time I am treating three epileptic patients. One is from Nagir and two are from entirely different locations in Hunza. But the Nagir case is one of these dream cases —the kind that every doctor hopes he'll come across some day in his work."

"Yes," he went on, "this Nagir case performs every act described in the medical journals. He's a perfect textbook case. The sick man has every condition, symptom and manifestation of epilepsy known to medical science."

Statistics indicate that in America there is one epileptic to every 350 of the population. The population of

Nagir and Hunza would be somewhere around 50,000 people. That would allow the people of these two principalities 140 epileptics, to be on par with America.

When I mentioned this to the doctor, he pooh-poohed the idea and said, "I'm sure there wouldn't be a dozen epileptics on both sides of the river. In fact, with these three I think I have them all."

"What is the most prominent complaint that you find among the people?"

"Dysentery," he replied, without hesitation.

"Do you know the cause?" was my next question.

"I'm afraid I can't answer that question with any degree of authority or proof, but I can tell you this . . . that it is seldom very serious and the condition usually clears up in a few days. I know of no deaths caused by it."

Now the Mir returned and I was relieved, for I felt that I had offended the fine man by asking the doctor if there were any epileptics in Hunza, when he had told me there weren't any.

So I turned to the Mir and explained the situation to him, stating that in my eagerness to get the data I had asked the same question of the doctor and mentioned my fear of offending him.

He replied, "I believe friendship is made of sterner stuff than that."

I was surprised and delighted by this statement.

Then he explained that he was called by one of his servants who had signaled to him—concerning preparation for an event that was to take place that evening.

My next question to both the doctor and the Mir was, "Is there anything in the line of health or disease that is developing in Hunza different from the old pattern? Things that didn't occur before, that are beginning to appear now?"

"Yes," said the doctor, "I am alarmed at the great increase in goiter cases in Hunza, especially among the younger people, where it is rampant. Also, cavities in the teeth of the people are being found regularly, whereas a few years ago tooth trouble in any form was practically unknown, judging from the information at my disposal!"

When he spoke to me he was genuinely distressed at the increased occurrence of both of these maladies.

"To what do you attribute the increase in these conditions, Doctor?" I asked.

He replied, "As yet I have been unable to lay my finger on anything specific concerning this."

I have been interested in Hunza for many years and during this period I have devoured every available piece of literature on these fascinating people. Thus, marshalling my mental forces, I said to him, "Have any major changes taken place in the diet or living habits of the people of Hunza?"

"Not that I am positively aware of," he said meditatingly.

"Where do the people of Hunza get their salt from?" I asked.

"It is usually flown in from Pindi to Gilgit and then carried up the trail to Baltit and other parts of Hunza."

I learned that it was also carried by jeep and pack animals from Rawalpindi across the Babusar Pass into Gilgit as well.

"How long has this been going on?"

This the good doctor could not answer. But the Mir was close by and he said it was longer than ten years now that the salt had been imported.

"Where did you get your salt from before?" I said to the Mir.

"Why," he replied, "the people of Hunza have been

mining salt from an area around Shimshal for many hundreds of years."

"Is there any difference between the salt that you import and that of Shimshal?"

"Much difference," said the Mir. "The salt that we import is pure white and very salty, whereas the salt mined in the Shimshal area was in its natural state and contained many impurities. The people prefer the imported salt because of its sharper saltier flavor."

"So it is true then," I said to the Mir, "that this aspect of modern civilization has crept into Hunza!"

The Mir and the doctor looked at each other and then somewhat reluctantly nodded in agreement.

Speaking somewhat forcibly, I said to both of them, "It is obvious that the imported salt is pure sodium chloride, whereas the salt that is brought down from Shimshal is something that has never been analyzed and obviously contains many minerals, so-called impurities."

Obviously the people of Hunza in the past did not know, did not care or did not feel the need to purify their salt, because even to a layman like myself, it is clear and obvious that by making a brine, the pure salt could be extracted.

Whether by error or design, this has never been practiced in Hunza.

"Does it not seem possible," I said to the doctor, "that the salt that was formerly used by the people of Hunza was the means of keeping goiter and dental caries away or at bay?"

"I hadn't thought of it before," replied the doctor, "but I will admit that it sounds logical and undoubtedly it is true!"

The Mir further admitted that little or no salt was being mined in Shimshal at the present time. Therefore it would seem to be indicated that the importation of

salt is causing the present goiter and dental caries situations in Hunza today.

"How would you describe the health conditions of the people of Hunza?" I next asked the doctor.

"Since my coming to Hunza a little less than a year ago, I have treated but a few patients a day and seldom are there more than one or two of the hospital beds utilized at one time. Apart from the greatly increasing incidence of goiter and dental caries, no other disease seems to have a firm hold in Hunza.

"Now that many of the boys and men of Hunza are leaving to go into the army in Pakistan, as well as seeking employment in other adjacent areas, diseases never known in Hunza before are making their appearance.

"Another unfortunate characteristic that I have to contend with is the fact that the people feel quite shy of coming to a doctor for advice and treatment, especially when it is concerned with the personal parts of the anatomy. Actually they are callously indifferent to medical science. The majority of them are, in fact, still living in the bygone age when diseases were supposed to be due to influences of evil spirits. So they depend to some degree and waste much of early precious time in useless superstitious pursuits of driving away the ghost."

These one or two patients that he treats daily have in most cases only minor ailments and, at that, a good share of these come from across the river and from the neighboring state of Nagir.

It occurred to me that there would probably be more illness during the winter. Many cases of eye troubles are treated during the winter, due, primarily, to the fact that most Hunzan homes are smoke-filled, because of the floor center fires and only the hole in the roof to allow the smoke to escape. Visitors invariably find living indoors and the smoke intolerable, but the people of

Hunza are more or less used to it. However, it does cause trouble with the eyes of the natives. It also weakens the lungs of some of the older women, who probably spend most of their time indoors during the cold months of the year.

I questioned the doctor and the Mir concerning prenatal care, but from what they told me, I could find no provisions whatsoever made for prenatal care outside the individual home.

The death rate at childbirth, they told me, was next to zero, but the doctor also mentioned that a woman would not consider going to a doctor for gynecological reasons under any circumstances. She would rather die. He also told me that before and after delivery of a child, Hunzan women do not know of any rest. The pregnant woman works harder and does more laborious jobs till the last day of the term, in the belief that hard and laborious work makes delivery easier and uneventful.

"But," he went on, "they are very careful in exerting themselves during the early days of conception. After delivery they are again up and doing again, only after a short rest."

It seems to be obvious that the method followed by the women of Hunza prior to childbirth "works" because both mother and child come out of it "uneventful." When events occur at such times, it usually means serious trouble.

He went on to tell me further that gallstones, renal calculus, coronary heart disease, hypertension, valvular lesions, myxoldeama thyrsotoxcasis, mental deficiencies, cancer, poliomyelitis, arthritis and diabetes are absolutely unknown in Hunza.

From what I have seen and gathered I am worried about the situation. They are now importing their sugar,

their salt and soon there will be a few more items added and, as more of their people go out of the country to earn a living and come back to visit or retire, more of civilization's curses will be brought back with them.

The doctor rather clearly indicated that infant mortality was not as low as some writers would like us to believe. I repeat—he made this quite clear.

Now I'll let you decide how it ties in with the statements made by Sir Robert McCarrison: "During the period of my association with these people I never saw a case of asthenic dyspepsia, of gastric or duodenal ulcer, of appendicitis, of mucous colitis, of cancer. . . . Among these people, the abdomen oversensitive to nerve impressions, to fatigue, anxiety, or cold was unknown. Indeed their buoyant abdominal health has, since my return to the West, provided a remarkable contrast with the dyspeptic and colonic lamentations of our highly civilized communities."

Smoking in general is not an addiction in Hunza. The water-pipe or hubble-bubble is used by some of the people, usually at gatherings or ceremonies. It is then passed around in a wide circle, each one taking a puff or two. The women are included, but only after all the men have finished.

Some of the citizens use snuff. It is tobacco mixed with the ash of a plant called "sopa," which is indigenous to that area. They take the tobacco and the sopa ash, put in a dash of water, stir it up and mix it into a paste. Then they place gobs of this paste under their lip, exactly the same as the snuff chewer does in the West, although this practice has been dying out in the Western world.

Just how much of the health of the people of Hunza is due to the fact that they get a lot of sunlight? That is a most pertinent question and one that will take a lot

of study before an answer can be given. They do get more sunshine than the Nagirwals—of that there is no doubt. While in Nagir fields are definitely in better tilth, their land is deeper, they have broader and more fertile valleys and can grow more and better food, yet undoubtedly the people of Hunza are by far the handsomer, healthier, more industrious and more energetic.

For my part I wasn't completely sold on the principle that the people of Hunza did have much more sunlight than the people of Nagir and I debated the matter with a few individuals. But each of them maintained stoutly that they did and claimed that they had scientific proof that Hunza did get more sunlight.

The last man with whom I did battle on the subject was Dr. Hermann Berger of West Germany. From his investigations he said that he had reached the conclusion positively and unequivocally, that the northern slope of the mountains through which the Hunza River flowed did get more sunlight than the southern slope which was Nagir.

As I found considerable difficulty and doubt concerning the theory of the people of Hunza getting more sunlight than the people of Nagir, I decided to draw a little chart that would illustrate the situation as I eventually found it to be. After seeing the drawing I think it will prove to you that the principle is natural and reasonable. (*See Fig.* 1.)

CHAPTER 45

Where Is Hunza?

At First I Had Taken it for granted that everyone knew exactly where Hunza lay. Then after many folks had queried me about the location of this strange country, I found that Hunza was seldom listed on any map and not even mentioned in many encyclopedias and gazetteers. Therefore, it is only fair and right for me to tell you where Hunza is and, if you do know, I trust you will pardon my repeating the position, but I want to establish its area clearly.

At the extreme northerly tip of Pakistan, rubbing shoulders with Afghanistan on the west, China on the north and northeast is Hunza and just 14 miles beyond the narrow corridor of Afghanistan lies Soviet Russia. The gateway between Hunza and China is the famed Mintaka Pass which is the original route followed by Marco Polo back so many hundred years ago. Hard-by is where the Hunza River has its source. This area along

the Hunza River is the principality called Hunza.

It is nestled in a most enchanting setting, surrounded by three of the world's greatest and tallest mountain systems. Another piece of knowledge that adds even greater interest and appeal is the meaning of the names of the three mountain systems: Hindu Kush means "killer of Hindus" because so many Hindus have lost their lives in crossing this range; Himalaya means "abode of snow", well-named when one considers their height and the vast masses of glaciers lying on the mountains' breasts; Karakorum means "the black rock" and one has to actually penetrate this system to realize how accurately those hard bare stone walls are named. The word Kush is pronounced with an "oo" sound. Himalayas is pronounced with the accent on the "al". The Karakorums are pronounced with the broad "a" accent for the first syllable and "oo" sound for the "um". This word can be spelled either "am" or "um". I prefer "um" because that is more in keeping with the sound as spoken by the people of that area.

Hunza actually forms a part of what was the old Kashmir and on maps it is shown as part of Kashmir and Jammu.

During my travels through the area I was plagued with the questions . . .Where exactly are the Hindu Kush, the Karakorums, the Himalayas? Where among these ranges is Hunza? 'Tis simple, you say? That's what I said, too, until I began to investigate and ask questions. Then I found myself in a maze of confusion from which I found it difficult to extricate myself.

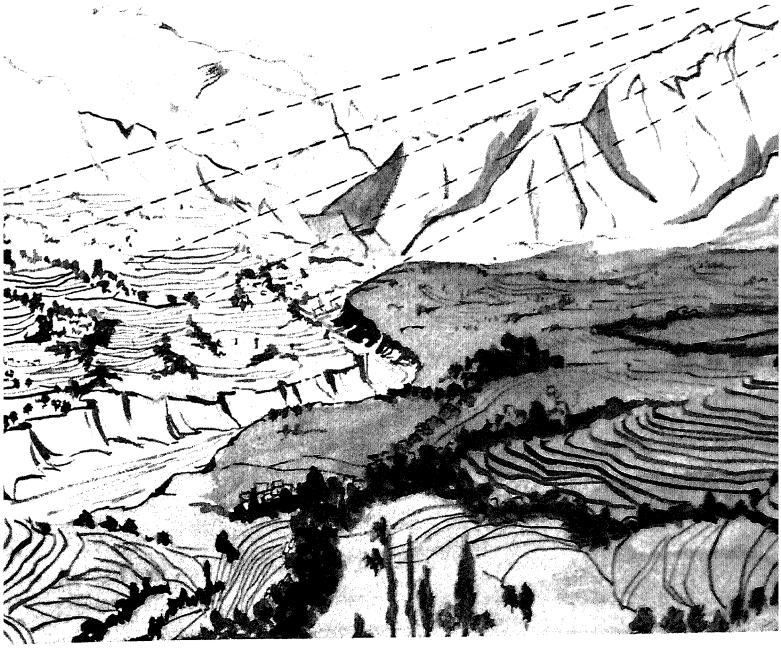
Surely one would believe that learned people, high school or university graduates both in America and abroad, would know a bit about the most important mountain systems in the world. But, no! Ask them yourself. See the ambiguous answers you get. Then you

will understand why "it plagued me thus."

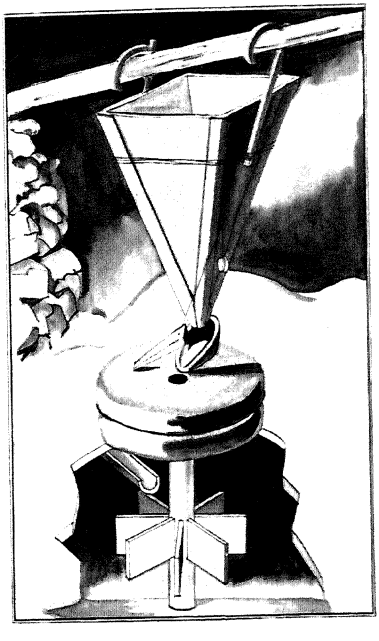
Many writers who have visited the area, and many others who have not, refer to Hunza as being in the Himalayas. I am sorry to be forced to contradict these good people, but from my research—and I repeat, research—I have come to the conclusion that Hunza is definitely in the Karakorum system and not the Himalayas.

If this error was made just occasionally by casual visitors or tourists, it could go unmentioned, but when men with science education and degrees make this mistake, it is somewhat unpardonable. There are very few maps or gazetteers that give this information accurately, and if you think I came by this information easily, I would suggest that you take down whatever maps you have available and do some research on the topic.

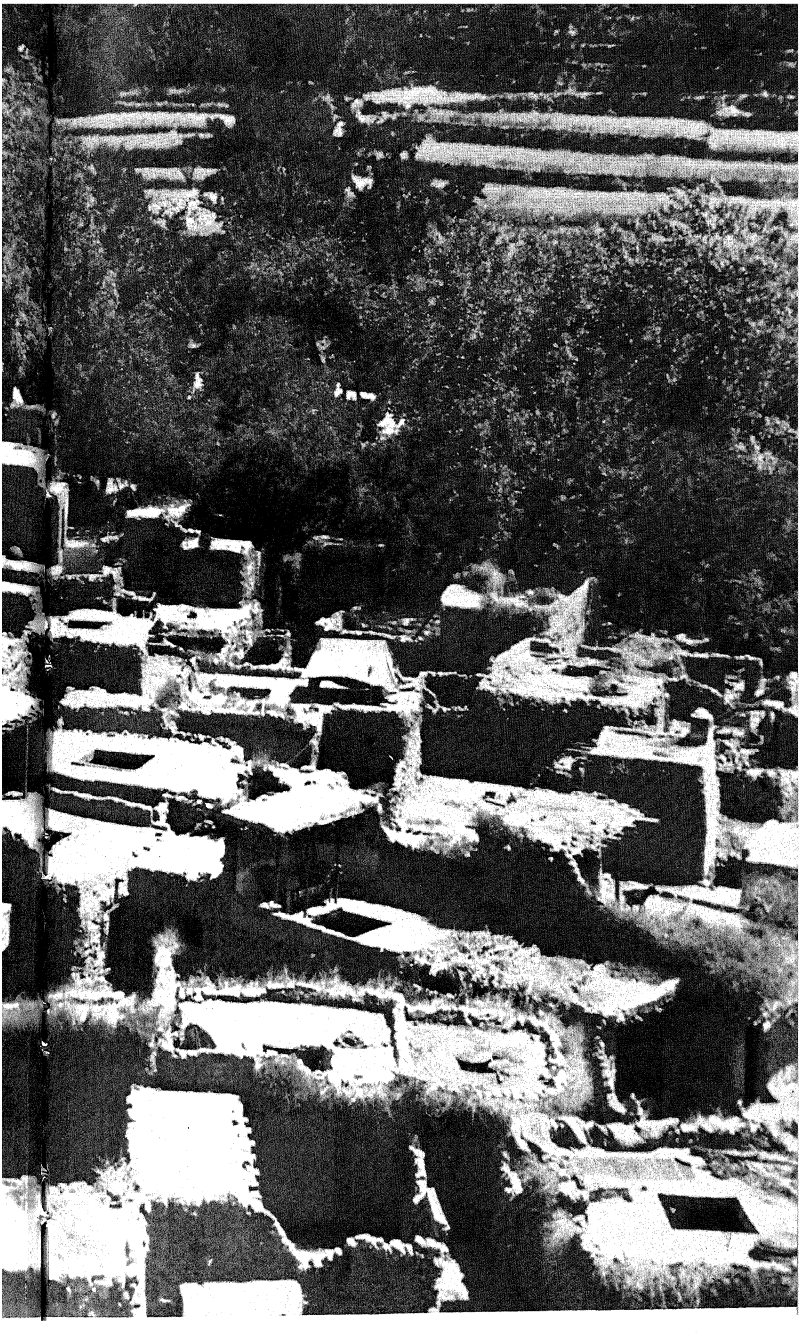
The eventual decision as to which are the Karakorums and which are the Himalayas came about when it was firmly laid down in one place that the northwest upper Indus separates the Karakorums from the Himalayas. The Karakorums seem to start about where the Hindu Kush ends in Kashmir. The exact spot, according to the best data that I could obtain, is 74 degrees east longitude and from there the Karakorums run approximately 300 miles southeast down to the main bend of the Shyok River. Even encyclopedias are not completely reliable in this instance, because one encyclopedia (in fact, Columbia is the one I'm talking about) lists Mountain K2 which is now known as Godwin Austen as the second tallest mountain peak in the world and places it both in the Karakorums and in the Himalayas. The Hindu Kush culminates at Tirach Mir —26,426 ft. high. Just about there the Karakorum range takes over and extends as specified above.



The Hunzans are conceded to have superior health *to* their neighbors. Nagir land is *more* shaded by mountains. (*Figure 1.*)



A water powered stone mill used by the Hunzans for making flour. (*Figure 2.*)



Hunzan houses have no chimneys—just a hole in the roof for smoke to escape.

View from the Fort at Baltit.

Part or all of the armies of Alexander the Great wound their way through the Hindu Kush mountains. Whether or not they ever found their way into the Karakorums, history does not designate, but I suspect that they did, because the Hunzans are supposed to be descendants of Alexander the Great or his soldiers and Hunza is in the Karakorums.

The Himalayas in the encyclopedia are stated to lie in India, Tibet, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan and China but I know for certain the Himalayas extend into Pakistan as well.

At this point I am not seeking to take issue with any gazetteer, encyclopedia or other volume of facts. I am just pointing out the difficulty I encountered in getting the information down to a semblance of order and accuracy. Further, I have consulted with, written to and requested details from many sources who should know the facts, and in practically every case I came to a dead end. It seems as though very few people in the world know the exact location and extent of these three mountain systems.

One man who did seem to know them and placed them accurately was Eric Shipton and by the heavens, he should know—he spent more time among these mountains than any white man in history.

A curious thing about the people of Hunza . . . they do not have names for the peaks in the area and there are some mighty lofty peaks. Even the famed Rakaposhi has no individual name in Hunza. It is just called "Dumani," the same as every other high mountain or mountain peak that they came across. Actually, "dumani" means "covered with a cloud."

I guess they're so accustomed to seeing these awesome peaks that they become impervious to them. So what? Another hill! Every time I asked one of the

bearers the name of yon mountain, he pointed to it and said, "Dumani!"

It was quite some time before I found out that it wasn't the same mountain we kept seeing from different views or angles. In fact, after the second day's travel and the only peak that we had passed was "Dumani," I began to get suspicious and thought that somebody was pulling my leg. As a matter of fact, I didn't find out that "Dumani" meant "covered with a cloud," "high peak" or "big mountain" until I came across Professor Berger in Baltit. He, being interested in the language of the people, put me straight on the "dumani" business.

What made matters even worse—or should I say, more difficult—was the fact that long after we had left the Hunza area, people kept telling me about the "Dobani" nullahs and the "Dobani" mountains. Sometimes they said "Dobani," other times they said "Dubani" and then they would also say "Dumani" and "Domani." I don't think they know themselves exactly what they mean. Of course when they said Dumani Nullah, it would mean the "river flowing from the glacier on the breast of the mountain" and when they pointed to a hill and said "Dumani," they meant it was a big hill.

In trying to relate the circumstances covering our travel and journey from Gilgit to Hunza one must maintain a sort of running encounter of the trail and the incidents surrounding it. Then, too, in other parts of the book I try to tell about the agriculture, the habits and health of the people of Hunza. Therefore little time remains for one to describe the charm, the beauty and whatever else may be said about the scenes one passes.

So will you bear with me while I try to describe as

graphically as possible one day's journey through these mountains.

There is little beauty to be seen until one gets beyond Nomal. I felt that the enchantment of the mountain terrain did not begin until we reached Chalt. From there to Baltit was one bit of indescribable grandeur after another.

From broad undulating valleys and river beds you suddenly come to a place where the mountain walls seem to come together to form a gorge. Here the river churned and frothed in its azure murkiness. The dark rock walls in all their sharp angled beauty presented an awesome spectacle and gave one the feeling of being suddenly closed in. For thousands of feet upward, shelves, abutments, butts, curves and gradings swept on in seemingly never-ending succession. Not a tuft of grass or even a bit of green moss or lichen could be seen by the naked eye. 'Twas bare but still beautiful . . . unadorned, but bejewelled. Then above were the light and clouds . . . and beyond, the blue sky and occasionally the sun could be seen.

The road would climb, weave and wind. It would broaden to 3, 4, or even 5 feet. Then 'twould narrow down sometimes to a bare 14 inches where the outside shoulder of the road had collapsed or fallen away, leaving a ragged, rugged edge which one took good care to avoid.

In places where the trail all but disappeared the solid rock face of the mountain wall had been chipped away or incut to allow a body or a small animal to pass. One had to crane one's neck or stoop to prevent a whack on the head that could send you hurtling down thousands of feet.

Continually there were patches of scree or morain that might be a hundred feet or a mile or more in

length. Over this the horses clattered judiciously, placing one foot down firmly somewhere before they lifted another. 'Twas the only way they could maneuver through this pebble and rock dashed remains of a slide. Masses of mountains dimmed in the distance.

Now and then a nullah would leap into view and had to be crossed or forded. Yes, many of them, the more or less permanent ones, were covered by bridges . . . some sound, durable and strong and others, more or less makeshift, which one had to cross with prudence and yet alacrity.

Whenever a rafik hove into view, I unconsciously would suck in my breath quickly and steel myself for the mental ordeal to come. There I knew the trail was held up or was maintained by a few slabs of rock pressed into fissures on the rock surface of the cliff or even a built up wall of stones, laid carefully one on top of another without being cemented in any way. At other times there were rods of steel driven into the rock surface and upon this the boards or road was laid. How these supports held, heaven only knows and there they were, jutting out over emptiness or nothingness. Did they fall away? Was there any danger? Well, you can answer that question for yourself. If you were going to travel along the trail to Hunza, they had to be crossed and the fact that they were continually being erected was ample proof that they were continually falling away.

In many places the road ribbons to a narrow ledge along a precarious outcropping of rock . . . courses that have been cut and built into the very face of the sheer and protruding cliffs, and many from a few hundred to many thousands of feet above the valley floor and often more than 15,000 feet above sea level. Landslides, washouts, rains of gigantic boulders, disintegra-

tion of rafiks have played havoc with travelers and caravans on this route since the first enterprising man inched his way across. Yet then and now bold, brave, fearless men were attracted and fascinated by the call to the serene loveliness, adventure and danger.

Then islands of greenery began to appear more frequently. These were the terraced fields, the oases that marked the villages. It was a pinpoint of light in a sea of darkness where rest, drink and food could be found, even if unappetizing and unabundant. These spots of green at sky-line-blue heights, among the millions of acres of barren rock and emptiness were pleasing both to the eye and soul and comforting, too, for the traveler.

Elsewhere, in the Hindu Kush or the Himalayas, could be found verdant valleys and hills and mountaintops that were furry and treed. But in the harsh, bleak, black Karakorums, such heavenly blessings could seldom, if ever, be found. Even the terraced tiny green fields could not, by any stretch of the imagination, be compared to a tree-covered hillside or mountain. Yet, let it not be said or thought that these bleak, barren hills did not have their loveliness and charm. They possessed beauty! Yes, they did! Like a tiger, 'twas fierce, sharp and untamed, but nevertheless, true beauty!

In the distance, one could always watch as the hills rolled, soared, dipped and then fell away to merge with the blue of the horizon. I know at times, allowing my vision to soar and wander about the mountains in the distance, my fatigue and weariness were forgotten and I plodded on, unmindful of the trail. My mind soared from peak to peak—some cloud-haloed, others bold and sharply defined.

One was always meeting the Hunza River, either face to face or having it course along at your side. Then,

too, as you rose where the road led on high crests, you could see the river winding, twisting, bending in the distance and you knew that you would be there soon—in an hour or a few.

As you course your way along the trail, you see the snow and ice covered mountain ranges with their glorious majestic crests gleaming in slides of silvery softness. You follow a road, that was known for at least a thousand years as a snaking, curving road of exceptional beauty, mid towering heights, nameless peaks and grave hazards.

'Twas but a scant few decades ago—yes, even that short a time—that one or two successful caravan trading trips, winding their way from China to the Khyber Pass via Peshawar, Pindi, Gilgit and the Hunza and Nagir Valleys, could make a trader rich, if he could get through without mishap and avoid being robbed by brigands.

The camel caravans would be laden with silks, gaily colored cloth, clothing, tea, porcelain, earthenware, jewels, gold and silver, ivory, salt, sweetening, spices, trinkets and bottles, fancy slippers, foot coverings, vases, trays and fancily inscribed artware, bars of iron and steel, knives, cooking utensils..

On this caravan route, animals do not walk side by side, but one behind the other.

It is no wonder that the owners of the caravans were glad to pay tribute for safe conduct through these defiles and passes.

We met caravans but they were evidently coming from the Pamirs and heading towards Gilgit, Peshawar and Srinagar. They were good sized ones with many donkeys and camels. The altitude wasn't high enough for yaks.

They looked sort of nondescript to me. I thought

they would be more interesting. But what can one expect from hard working travelers through a wicked terrain? They didn't look rich or impressive, but I was forced to admit that it did take courage and determination. 'Twas not meat for a weak man.

It occurred to me that a caravan would not be easy picking for a bandit or bandits. They'd best have superiority of numbers because men with weak stomachs or weak heads don't travel in caravans.

What is the lure that mountains hold for many men? I've learned that they can be as beautiful, as enchanting, as alluring and yes, even as demanding and possessive as any woman. I have never known a man who went to his death for a woman, but I have read and known of many who went to their death for a mountain . . . Nanga Parbat, especially.

They must exert a tremendous influence over man. And it is a fascination that never wears off. It's easy not to fall in love with them as long as you have never seen them and been among them but, if you are so unfortunate as to have made their acquaintance and mingled in their company, then you are lost. You will never be indifferent to their charms again. They'll permeate your heart and soul and penetrate reaches that you never knew you owned—and you own them no longer, for they are possessed by peaks and snows and summits and glaciers. You will never again know rest or settling down, for the glaciers' gleam has struck home and to it you will have to return!

CHAPTER 46

Glacier's Milk

My First close up view of glacial water was when I waded into the Gilgit River to get washed up after we had been established at the Gilgit bungalow.

We were not quite prepared to see water of this color. It can best be described by saying it was a murky grey. I wanted to say silvery grey, and that would sound much prettier, but it wouldn't be quite true. I thought at times that it looked brownish but my friend Cec and I examined it and sought to find words that would describe it. We couldn't come up with a proper fitting description. Chalky by itself wouldn't be right because chalk is quite white. I still think that murky grey is the best description I can find. A few days later, when, after following the Gilgit River, we came to the curve where it was joined by the Hunza River, we found that the water in both beds was identical in color.

We continued along the Hunza River. Regularly,

here and there, spurting, splashing, spilling out of crevices, canyons, valleys and other apertures in the mountain walls were these numerous nullahs . . . all glacial. The amount of rainwater that contributes to these rivers can be truthfully said to be negligible.

In Gilgit wherever I had a drink—at the airport, at the bazaar or in the P.A.'s residence—the water was invariably clear. The water brought to us in our apartment at the Mir's residence was the same color as that flowing in the Hunza and Gilgit Rivers.

At my first meal in the Mir's dining room, and at all subsequent meals, there was a tall glass of water placed in front of each guest's large individual plate. I quickly noticed that my glass had clear water, whereas the Mir's glass contained the native murky grey water. As my eyes danced down the glasses on both sides of the table, I saw that the visitors had the clear water and the native Hunzans had the same water as the Mir.

So I put the question to the Mir that first night, "Why is your water different from mine?"

"Well, I have found," he said, "that my guests are a little bit wary about drinking our murky colored water. So to allay their fears and worries, I provide special clear water. It is brought in and stored and we also get it from a spring that flows through a bed of pebbles."

"Well, why do you not drink the clear water, too?" I pressed.

"Because we like the murky water," he replied with a smile.

"Well, now," I said, "if it's good enough for you, it's good enough for me. May I have Hunza water?"

"With pleasure!" he replied, and he immediately called one of his servants to bring me a glass of good Hunza water and that is what was served at my place at the table at every subsequent meal. But I was the

only visitor who took this big risk.

In Gilgit I know that they prefer to drink other water than that from the murky grey waters of the Gilgit. I don't know about the other municipalities, towns and villages anywhere else in the area, but I do know that in Hunza they drink the water that is brought to them from the glacier-fed conduits.

A long time ago I first read the works of Sir Albert Howard. I remember vividly where he said something to this effect: some day some enterprising fellow will get himself some samples of Hunza water and have it analyzed and find out exactly what it contains. Maybe this will give a clue concerning the health of those remarkable people.

That is precisely what I have done. I hope that I meet Sir Albert Howard's classification of an enterprising individual!

Through the years of hearing, reading and studying the ways of life of the Hunza people, I had begun to feel that their water played some important part in their welfare. Previously, it had never occurred to me that water did more than "wet", whether used in the fields or in the body. To this pathetic ignorance I must ashamedly admit.

In tramping the area from Gilgit to Altit and a bit beyond and from Gilgit towards Punial and then, too, flying over (or should I say between and just above) another vast area of mountains, one begins to strike up a sort of friendship with these lofty peaks. I'm not trying to sound prophetic or even intimate with these supposedly inanimate giants, but it would surprise you to learn how quickly you come to look upon them like ordinary things . . . for example, like our native fields, woodlands, valleys, hills and dales.

Glaciers are sighted everywhere. If not within a

stone's throw or close vision, at least 10 or 20 miles away on Rakaposhi's flank or Ultar's side lies a massive, melting glacier. In the Karakorum range lies the most immense gathering or accumulation of glaciers to be found anywhere in the world, with the exception of those in the polar regions. Evidence on a scientific basis clearly indicates that most of these glaciers are receding and a more or less continuous flow of water is the result.

So, please let your imagination run wild with me and see the picture that I am trying to portray. Millions of tons of ice and snow, hundreds or thousands of feet thick, are piled here, there and everywhere on mountain bosoms, sides and flanks. This huge mass is moving slowly, inexorably downward and with it comes a scraping of the face of the mountain. No mineral, no rock, no metal, no alchemy is strong enough to resist the pressure and weight of those millions of tons, and a finely ground coat containing some or all of the treasures moves downward to form a nullah. The nullah joins the Hunza, the Hunza joins forces with the Gilgit and, combined, they hurl their forceful bodies into the winding Indus.

Whereas the Hunza and Gilgit Rivers are purely glacial rivers, the Indus is made up of hundreds of smaller streams and rivers that carry the drainage of the Indian and Pakistan watersheds. The contribution of the Gilgit is lost in the immense flow.

It is my belief, from close studies and careful observations, that the glacial streams—caught as they rise from their glacial beds—carry with them in colloidal solution, some (if not all) of the mineral constituents found in these mountains.

From geological survey reports that I have seen and read, most, if not all, of the known minerals are to be found there. That is neither strange nor surprising, for

in these mountains—the Karakorums, the Hindu Kush, and the Himalayas—are found many of the earth's most massive, tallest peaks.

'Tis this wealth of solvent minerals in liquid form that is guided by means of conduits to the stone-terraced fields of the valleys of Hunza and allowed to soak and penetrate into their soil. Then, too, 'tis religiously drunk and otherwise used by all the natives and their animals.

Here let us rest to ponder what we have learned and to examine the facts. It is of greater import perhaps than you realize.

Elsewhere I have related that the people of Hunza return everything to the soil, and now their conduits with which they irrigate their land also bring needed or required minerals. In many locations throughout the world I know that farming is practiced along strictly natural, organic lines, where everything is duly returned to the soil from whence it was taken. In America chiefly, and to some extent in Europe and elsewhere, chemical fertilizers are being put on and into the soil. But I strongly doubt if there is another spot on the earth's vast surface (apart from Hunza) where both the organic and the inorganic requisites are placed on and in the soil by means of natural and time honored means and proportions.

Oh, yes, I know that there are places in the world where man-made rock compounds are put on the soil. In fact I know that this is being practiced to a wide extent at the present time in Russia through Lysenko's teaching. But wait . . . nowhere in the world, except in Hunza are these proportions expertly blended and mixed by nature herself, in her huge glacial laboratories.

I'd like to make a distinction between the way

fertilizers, minerals and inorganic substances are placed upon the soil elsewhere and in Hunza. In my opinion, in Hunza the minerals go onto the soil in colloidal state. You can easily learn what colloidal means if you care to inform yourself. But here is a short terse explanation according to a dictionary of science:

> "Colloidal State: The state of a solute in a solution when its molecules are not present as separate entities as in a true solution, but grouped together to form solute 'particles'. The presence of these particles, which are approximately one hundred-thousandth to one ten-millionth of a centimeter across, can often be detected by means of the ultramicroscope. As a result of the grouping of the molecules, a solute in the colloidal state cannot pass through a suitable semipermeable membrane and gives rise to negligible osmotic pressure, depression of freezing point and elevation of boiling point effects. The molecular groups or particles of the solute carry a resultant electric charge, generally of the same sign for all the particles."

You've heard it said that a little bit of knowledge can be a dangerous thing. I completely agree with that statement. Well, I do not profess to know anything! I do not set myself up as an authority on anything! I suggest that I am a keenly interested observer who tries to state his views forcibly and with as much reason and conviction as he is able to command.

I have read that the way the human system takes nourishment is by means of the body membranes taking up nutrients in a colloidal solution. Hunza water contains, in my opinion, minerals in colloidal solution. Therefore the people of Hunza get their nutrients from their water and from their food.

I lay the results of my studies before you!

Could that be the reason the people of Hunza can exist, be strong, have great powers of endurance and tremendous amounts of energy on practically a starvation diet?

I'm not telling you . . . I'm asking you!

Could it be that the "glacial milk" they drink copiously, supplies them with all the elements in nutrient form that their bodies require? Is that why other writers and authorities claim they look 40 when they're 60 or 70? Is that why men close to 100 sire children? Is that why some men have been known to live to reach the age of 140 years? Is that why the women of 70 and 80 look like our women of 40? Is that why they can walk the distance of 60 or more miles to Gilgit over the grimmest terrain in the world, conclude their business and turn around and start walking back again? Is that why they always look content and happy and why their gait is springy and full of life and vitality? Is that why I couldn't find very many new graves in their cemeteries?

I've given you the facts. I've told you what I've *seen,* what I've *heard* and even what I've *read.* Perhaps your mind is more capable of tying up the loose ends. Maybe you can give me the answer!

At first I wondered whether or not the people of Hunza knew from what sources came their strength. I suspect that they know, because they can have clear water for drinking if they want it. Even when it is available they won't take it. I think they know, to a greater or lesser degree, from what sources their health is derived!

CHAPTER 47

Hunza Agriculture -- "Use and Return"

IN A COUNTRY like Hunza where land is so scarce and therefore precious, it behooves the man who tills the soil to get everything he can out of it and, what is even more important, to put back everything humanly possible so that he will be able to maintain it indefinitely, in a high state of health and fertility.

The people who farm that land realize full well that their health, their well-being and their very lives depend entirely upon the crops that are produced. In order to maintain the soil in good health and tilth, nothing can be wasted.

Where irrigation is used, the leaching of soil nutrients can and often does become a serious problem. For example, at Gilgit when I was visiting the P.A.'s garden, he informed me that he was having trouble growing certain crops, which were infested with insects. Now this is not in Hunza, but in Gilgit.

After close examination of the various factors, as well as the slope of the soil and the supply of water, I reached the conclusion that the trouble he was having was positively caused by the overflowing water—too often and too much. Whoever it was who was irrigating his garden allowed too much water to come down the trenches and when it overflowed, it took with it many of the water-soluble nutrients from the soil.

Therefore, wherever overflows or runoffs are allowed on terraced and irrigated soils, there will be a positive leaching of the nutrients, which will end in imbalance and cause crop difficulties and bring on insects and diseases.

In Hunza, each farmer applies his water personally and when sufficient water is put onto his fields and crops the flow is immediately stopped. In Gilgit, the P.A.'s gardener didn't worry if there was any runoff. In the first place, the land wasn't his own. Secondly, he had a large area to look after and probably couldn't give it as close attention as it required. But with the Hunza farmer it was entirely different. He had only a small amount of land ranging from ¾ of an acre to 5 acres, sometimes made up of 3 or 4 pieces—some as small as 1/10 of an acre each. Therefore he could afford to watch every inch of it with care, affection and understanding, and I'm sure the Hunzans learned long ago that the overflow could in subsequent years bring disease, crop failure and destruction.

As I walked among the farms in Hunza, I specifically looked for the overflowing of irrigated terraced lands, but I did not in one case see this happen . . . which led me to believe that the Hunzan farmers have learned that principle well.

Along the trail, whenever I came in sight of the irrigated patches that indicated the cultivated farm-

land of the area, I tried to figure out exactly what the different crops were. In my travels throughout other parts of the world—for example, in Europe—I would be hard pressed to pick out the different crops that were being grown in the fields by their color, their height and the way they bent or leaned with the breezes that blew. But all along the trail leading to Baltit, on both the Nagir and Hunza sides, this problem was not as great, nor did it cause me as much difficulty for identification purposes, because the majority of crops growing was wheat.

I kept looking for rice paddies, because I definitely had the feeling that throughout this part of the world a lot of rice would be grown. And while I found a lot of rice being grown in Pakistan, Afghanistan and India, in Hunza and Nagir rice in the fields or paddies was distinctly conspicuous by its absence. I did find a field here and there, but they were definitely few and far between.

Students and those interested in organic agriculture have looked upon Hunza for many years now as the last stronghold of nature's way. Because of the importance attached by many people to conditions in Hunza, I tried to make my study as careful as possible. As yet there is no sign whatsoever of chemical fertilizers being used.

Because of the terraces built one upon the other, Hunza farming has been termed "staircase farming" and this staircase farming has some, if not many, advantages. First, it effects good drainage. Second, it gives a deeper penetration of air into the soil. This soil aeration is considered beneficial to soil microorganisms and it promotes rapid growth, and enables the bacteria and the roots of plants to derive much benefit from the elements contained in the air, which can be combined with those in the soil.

The glacial waters definitely do contain a variety of

minerals and by allowing these glacial streams to be spread over the soil, the nutrients are left in the soil as the water soaks into it.

The principle of returning to the land that which belongs to the land has been and is, at the present time, scrupulously followed. The only farm implement which I could find on the Hunzan farms was the primitive plow and invariably it was pulled by a bullock. The plowing is never deep and is practiced chiefly to sort of clean the field, cover the organic matter that has been spread upon it or left upon it and prepare the field for the next crop.

All the work that has to be done is done by hand—with or without the assistance of domesticated farm animals. There is no substitute for manual labor and the men, women and even young children share in the farm work.

From what I could observe, weeds were not a problem and the reasons are clear. There are few indigenous, native plants in the area. Practically all of the growing plants that I could spy were in cultivated areas. The maxim in Hunza evidently is if a place can grow weeds, then it should be cultivated and usually that principle is followed. This all adds up to the fact that there are few weed seeds distributed in the area and therefore they are not in the soil to spring up, whenever the farmer's back is turned.

I want to stress once more that the mineral requirements of the fields of the Hunza farmer are met and replenished by the fine silt, ground by the glaciers from the rocky surfaces and carried down to the Hunza farmers by the conduits and spread on their land.

Our modern civilization attaches great importance to and stresses the value of flavor and appearance in

the commodities that they eat. If that is the criterion, then I am forced to admit openly that the fruits, vegetables and cereal grains of Hunza do not compare with those of the West.

Contrary to what any writer, expert or visitor to Hunza has stated, in my opinion and belief, Hunzan fruit, vegetables and grains are not superior to those of the West. From the strict viewpoint of taste, size and appearance the American fruits, vegetables and grains are far better than those grown in Hunza. In this matter I must humbly yet fairly state, that the American standards and qualities in fruits make the similar varieties of fruits of other countries seem poor, puny and second rate by comparison.

Hunza need not feel too badly because of this as millions of dollars are spent annually in America by a hundred or more experimental farms of vast acreages, breeding fruits, nuts, vegetables, forage crops and grains. If some of these newer varieties of fruits or vegetables and grains were grown on Hunzan soils and under Hunzan conditions, I might have a different story to tell.

Let me cite an example. In America, in order to find a better strain of strawberries, millions—and I repeat, millions—of seedlings have been planted. These plants have been carefully tended and watched. Then a selection of a mere handful from all of these for further testing was made. From these results a few new varieties which have shown an excellence of habit of growth, vitality, good foliage, ease of propagation, resistance to various diseases, flavor and color of fruit, good bearing qualities and other important factors were selected and disseminated throughout the country. No one in his right mind would expect tiny Hunza to follow such a procedure. In fact, only in the United

States would such an undertaking be possible.

It is difficult to make comparisons flavorwise because there are many varieties of each and every fruit and vegetable. We have all eaten peaches that were filled with juice and flavor and others that were flavorless and mealy. We have all eaten carrots that were sweet and crisp and we've also had them where they had no flavor and tasted like dried wood or were bitter. Two different kinds of carrots grown on the same soil can have an entirely different flavor. This could be applied to beets, peas or any other garden crop. The fault therein does not always lie in the soil, but in the inherent characteristics of the variety itself. Therefore the superiority of the flavor of the fruit in most cases lies in the variety, rather than in the soil in which they were grown. Sometimes time of harvest is a factor, too.

While I would very much like to say that the natural organically grown Hunzan fruits and vegetables and grains were much superior in flavor to those grown in the West where chemical fertilizers are used, I am afraid that I cannot honestly make that statement.

But I suggest that the thoroughly inbred organically minded individual take heart. If the people of Hunza had soil that even remotely resembled our best near virgin soils in tilth, humus content and expanse, along with the newer and better strains of fruits, vegetables and grains, I am sure they would have the best flavored, best tasting and best quality food crops in all creation.

I know for an absolute fact that there are many farmers—hundreds and probably thousands of them in both Canada and the United States—who do not use chemical fertilizers. Perhaps it is my good fortune to eat most of my grain, fruits and vegetables from such farms and in truth, I strive in every instance to procure organically grown fruits, vegetables and grain. Further,

on my own farm we definitely and positively use neither chemical fertilizers nor sprays.

You can understand in Hunza that tastewise there is no interference or problem from chemical fertilizers and sprays.

I believe that the myth about the flavor and succulence of the Hunzan apricots came about because visitors ate the apricots ripe and freshly picked from the trees, whereas at home the apricots they ate were picked from the trees days before, because they had to be shipped long distances, and therein lay the difference in flavor.

In January, 1959, I sent the Mir of Hunza good sized packages of the different kinds of hardy wheat that were created by the experimental farms of the Dominion of Canada. It was special seed, tested for hardiness in the colder areas and of such quality that would produce a fine loaf of bread.

I also sent the best strains of carrots, cabbages, Brussels sprouts, lettuce, beets and other vegetables. But when I was dining with the Mir and asked him about the results with the seeds, he admitted that the only seed they had got planted that year was the lettuce, which was being enjoyed at the Mir's table. He said that he would try the rest of them the following year.

It is understandable that the Western world would have better varieties of fruits, vegetables and grains, because here we spend millions and millions of dollars on hybridizing, trials, selections and improving the various strains . . . so we should get some results from our efforts . . . and we do! Therefore, without question, the Hunzans could profit by using Western strains of grains, vegetables and fruits. This is one aspect of modern civilization that could help them greatly.

The apricots that I saw, tasted and ate were not the

huge fine quality products that I was told they were. I admit here further that I was in Hunza in July and the later, perhaps the better, varieties were not available or ripe yet. But upon questioning the various people, there was no information given to me that indicated the later maturing kinds were superior to the earlier ones.

So as in vegetables and grains, their fruit could be greatly improved by adopting some of the Western varieties. This could easily be done by having budwood sent to them and they in turn would graft this budwood onto their young stock.

I have made arrangements with the Mir of Hunza and the P.A. at Gilgit to supply them with this required grafting wood at the proper time, and it will be duly sent to them, so that in the future they may have some of the benefit of the West's hybridization and research program. I took along with me a few of the best budding knives that I could procure and I left two with the P.A. at Gilgit and the others with the Mir of Hunza and I explained their use.

In talking with the Mir about the planting of new varieties and improved strains, he claimed that his people did graft and seek new varieties and strains, but from the little time I had to inspect things, I did not see any young trees or any great number of grafts that would indicate this being a widely practiced policy. I found nothing resembling a nursery in Hunza or Nagir, but there was a small, unimpressive nursery run by the Pakistani government in Gilgit. Maybe this is the forerunner of bigger and better things to come.

There appears to be no central source of seed supply in Hunza. It seems that each farmer saves seeds for next year's crops or barters with his neighbor. In some years, when, because of any one of many conditions

that may exist or be created in an agricultural community, no seed is available, the Mir has been known to procure supplies from neighboring states and supply his people with sufficient planting stock.

While through the entire East cow dung and yak dung are used for fuel, in Hunza this is positively not true. The Hunzans are too intelligent to use the mainstay of their lives for fuel. Once it is burned it is gone; but if it is put back into the land, it is there to produce crops for another year. They show their intelligence, if proof of their intelligence is needed, by this one sound principle of self-survival in their means of agriculture.

However, in the more northerly sections of Hunza, closer to the Chinese border, they do use yak dung for fires because of the almost total lack of wood or other types of fuel. They just have to keep themselves warm during the winter.

Here is a list of the vegetables grown in Hunza—potatoes, turnips, carrots, beans, peas, lettuce, pumpkins, tomatoes, melons, watermelons, radishes, onions, cabbage, spinach, cauliflower.

In fruits there are mulberries, apricots, apples, pears, peaches, grapes, walnuts, almonds, a few plums and some cherries.

Grapes are grown fairly extensively because they can plant them against most any wall, as long as they have a bit of soil in which to gain a foothold for their roots. From these grapes they make their Hunzan wine.

They grow a few strawberries, but I could find no currants, gooseberries, raspberries—nor did they know what raspberries were.

The grains grown in Hunza, starting from the most important, are wheat, barley, rye, millet, buckwheat and a small quantity of rice. Some alfalfa is grown as a forage crop.

There are no bees in Hunza and, consequently, no honey unless it is imported. This will probably come as a surprise to most people. I suspected this even before I reached Hunza. That is why I went in search of bees and honey in Hunza. But search and peer as I did, no bees were to be found and upon questioning I found that, though they had even tried importing them, they didn't remain or they died off.

Obviously the Hunza terrain is too tough and arduous for bees. Bees, contrary to what most people believe, like it soft. Set out a field of clover or a good sized patch of asters or other good honey-makers and bees will flock to your land, but, where you have a scattered flower here and there, the bees either won't bother or won't be able to find them.

Probably from a purely economic reason the bee finds Hunza uninviting. He probably would have to fly too far and too high to get any supply of nectar or honey and I don't think he'd make as much food as would be required to supplant the energy that was being used up. So after taking the important factors into consideration, it is clear that it is unwise for bees to live in Hunza. Even if it were possible to get a couple of colonies of bees established, it would do the Hunzan farmer no good because if he took away part of their honey, they would starve to death. A bee in most instances, where at all possible, stores more honey than he will require. He plays it secure by allowing a margin of safety. But in Hunza he'd have a hard enough time getting sufficient honey to keep him through the winter—let alone having some for the Hunzan farmer! From this it would appear that bees are not as smart or diligent as we think they are—or are they? Can they be blamed for seeking more colorful flowerier pastures?

CHAPTER 48

Religion and Customs

THE PEOPLE of Hunza are Mohammedan. From all reports that I have been able to gather and from their own voluntary statements, I assume that religion with them is something that they don't go overboard about. As a matter of fact, Hunza is one of the few countries in all the world where there has never been any religious strife, nor does even the faintest glimmer of it exist there today.

In other words, they can take their religion or leave it alone!

Just how important a part this plays in the economy of the people is hard to estimate, but one thing is sure —religion does not make the demands upon their time that it does with many other people. In the East, where religion can be a mania or almost a complete absorption or way of life for many people, this can be of vital consequence.

Here I will quote from *The Autobiography of Sir Mohomed Nazim Khan,* K.C.I.E. (Mir of Hunza from 1892-1938 and grandfather of the present Mir):

"The people of Hunza were originally idolators and they became Shias when intermarriage with the ruling family of Baltistan was arranged and later, when my great grandfather Shah Salam Khan was on the throne, most of the country became Maulai. In Ganesh and Hinni, there are still a few Shias and two Sunnis. When I became Mir I declared to the people that they could adopt what religion they would, which annoyed my advisers who said that a country with many religions was bound to fall. I said that religion had nothing to do with ruling and have proved myself right in that there has been no religious strife in the country since that time."

Maybe the Hunzan farmer mumbles his prayers while he is working, but he seemingly doesn't appear to stop from his efforts on behalf of his farm.

From my actual experiences in seeing and viewing religions throughout the world, I am of the opinion that, where religion demands too much of a man's time, his industry suffers and this affects his standard of living. It is a possibility that pious, religious people throughout the world will take exception to this but, nevertheless, I am stating this as my own opinion, based on my findings and observations, and that's all it is. If anyone wants to debate the point with me, I'd be happy to provide the time and the opportunity.

The Hunzans are not fanatics and therefore they can devote more time to their labors than those who spend their time praying and resting, because of religious holidays and observances.

Being Mohammedans, circumcision is practiced on all male children. Normally this operation is performed

when a child is one month old. Due to any one of many circumstances, it can be put off, but it is performed before the child becomes of school age in practically all cases.

The Mir told me a case of a man who came from Murtazabad. He had gone away to Persia when he was just young and eventually returned to Hunza uncircumcised. Then he met a girl, fell in love and wanted to get married. Before the marriage ceremony could be performed, he had to allow himself to be circumcised. This, in a mature male can amount to major surgery and a long period of illness, pain and recovery.

Evidently circumcision has been proved beneficial to mankind because, from the information that I have received, it is now generally practiced throughout the Western world as well. It is unthinkable that any Mohammedan would take unto himself a wife before he had been circumcised. By law a man can marry at 15 and a woman, or should I say girl, when she is 9 years of age. Therefore it is almost compulsory that circumcision be performed before a male is 15.

It is quite common for the parents to arrange for their children's marriages when quite young. That is, the parents betroth the children to each other even from the tender ages of childhood. Nowadays in Hunza the men marry between the ages of 19 and 21 and the girls from the ages of 13 to 15. Actually that isn't too far different from the custom in the West.

All marriages take place at one time of the year in Hunza—usually December 21st—and there must be snow on the ground on the Hunzan wedding day. Where the Mohammedan law runs in opposition to the Hunzan law, the Hunzan law invariably prevails.

Yes, there is divorce in Hunza, but it is very rare.

The Hunzan law says that in such cases a child must remain with the mother until it is at least 10 years of age. Of course the child can remain with the mother after that period, too, but the father does not have to pay for its keep after that. Divorce is granted to a man only on the grounds of adultery.

Under Hunzan law a woman cannot get a divorce due to any action on the part of her husband. However, on some occasions where there has been extreme provocation or other clear logical reasons, and the woman brings her justifiable complaint for divorce before the Mir in person, and if the Mir believes her case merits divorce or separation from the man, he will ask or demand of the man that he divorce his wife.

If the wife decides or wants to leave her husband's bed and board of her own free will, the husband does not have to pay for her keep. She will not receive sustenance from him, but he does have to supply her with clothing twice a year.

In the event of the death of his wife, the husband is required to wait two months and seven days before he can remarry. However, with the woman, in the event of the death of her husband, she must wait three months and ten days before she can remarry.

The Mir gave me an example of a divorce case where a certain man had the insidious habit of beating his wife. It seemed he would administer a sound thrashing at the slightest, or even without provocation, until the girl's parents and friends began to fear for her life. In this instance the wife-beater was notified quite clearly and distinctly that it would be in the best interests of all concerned if he gave his wife a divorce.

I don't know in what light they regarded this, but now that they knew the man was an avowed wife-beater, if any other woman took the risk of marrying

him, she would at least know beforehand what she had to contend with. Then again, as the Mir performs all marriages, maybe he wouldn't allow this young man to take a second wife. I did not inquire any further into the details concerning this case, but I admit that I was somewhat surprised to think that a good healthy happy Hunzan would resort to one of civilization's favorite pastimes . . . wife-beating.

Wife-beating generally seems to be broadly practiced in Hunza. This struck me as being most strange for I could see little cause or likelihood of opportunities for misdemeanors on the part of the wife.

Upon taking the matter up with the Mir, he told me that most cases of wife-beating were brought about by nagging, and in Hunza that is sufficient justifiable cause for a man to administer a sound thrashing to his wife and she can't take him to the Mir's court about it, either. The next most frequent cause for wife-beating is over-generosity to her parents with her husband's possessions.

Wife-beating under such provocations as stated might meet with universal support and approval on the part of mankind. There may be principles and practices in Hunza that will not find widespread support in the West, but I'll bet on the basis of the two causes for wife-beating there will be broad, if not general, male approval.

By Hunza law a daughter cannot inherit property. The best that she can get in a property settlement is the use of the property for her lifetime. It then must revert to a male member of the father's family. There have been instances where a daughter has been willed an individual tree—in most cases, an apricot tree. This remains her property, or at least the crops do, for as long as the tree or she lives.

Morality in Hunza is of a high level, equal to that of the best records in the world. Sexual promiscuity on the part of either male or female is practically unknown. It is clear and established that they are clean thinking and clean living people. However, the Mir did tell me that on rare occasions there was trouble involving the eternal triangle.

The strangest custom that I found practiced in Hunza was that followed by the royal family . . . that is, the Mir's family . . . and it pertained to their children. As soon as a child is born to the royal family, it is given out to foster parents to be reared and brought up by these parents as their own. And there the royal child remains for an unspecified period of years. The child is brought to the palace on occasions and then returned to its foster home.

The exact purpose for this practice was hard to pin down. I felt that probably it was done to save the queen or Rani the difficulty of raising the child through its infancy. I also thought that perhaps this would allow the queen to have more children, and thus be sure to create a long line of descendants to follow in the ruler's footsteps or lineage. It was also suggested that this was a way or manner or means of strengthening the ties of the ruler with his people—a sort of democratic gesture.

The people to whom the child is given out for rearing are referred to as "milk parents" or "milk family." The tie that is thus, established with these people is never broken. The individual members of the family are referred to as the milk-mother, the milk-father, the milk-brother and the milk-sister.

In every case, before the child is given out to its milk parents, their character, their habits and their way of life are carefully scrutinized so that the royal couple

know that the child will be given a fine upbringing.

It is to be expected that the milk parents will be given much consideration and favors from the Mir's household and family . . . and the Mir has and still does provide better than average homes or residences for these selected people.

In Hunza at the present time, the Mir has built a row or unit of bungalows for these milk parents and they are given food and necessities from the royal kitchen.

I have tried to find some connection of this practice with other nations or peoples. So far my search has been unsuccessful in this regard.

Death is not the serious thing with the people of Hunza that it is with most other peoples throughout the world. That does not mean that there is no sadness and mourning, but it does not take on the same scope and seriousness that it does in the West. This is primarily due to the religion and beliefs of the people. Being Mohammedans, they believe in predestination . . . "So Allah wills."

Seldom are graves of departed kinfolk visited—nor are flowers laid upon them. In fact, very little maintenance is ever carried out on graves. Visits to the graves or graveyards are definitely not encouraged. The dead are revered, but visiting the grave of the departed is not really the accepted thing in Hunza.

The dead are often commemorated by having roadside lean-tos or "baldies," as they call them, erected for them . . . where a man can stop and find a bit of shelter during a storm, or rest his pack or load. They also build "jhurks" or water holes to serve the same purpose. Women are seldom commemorated in this manner. The best that a woman can hope to get is a rock pile erected in her memory.

CHAPTER 49

Hunza vs. Nagir

AFTER I'VE had some time to think over the experiences of my visit to Hunza, I've been asked by others and I've also asked myself, "Is there any reason for the evident superiority of the Hunzans over the neighboring peoples?"

So I took the case of the people of Nagir, for example, and made comparisons with them. I'm not even sure whether that is a fair or proper means of comparison.

It seems somewhat strange to me that while the virtues of the people of Hunza were being extolled, the bad features or unredeeming qualities of the people of Nagir were being brought to the fore. So I took pains to search and investigate and I came up with the fact that the people of Hunza and Nagir are of identical stock and that it was people originally from Hunza who populated Nagir.

Then wherein lies the difference? What happened through the years to create the obvious difference that everyone sees and feels the minute he comes into the territory? I am not an anthropologist, nor have I training in any scientific field. Therefore, I am quite unprepared to speak with any degree of authority, but I am told the difference is that the people of Nagir accepted or welcomed strangers and settlers from other parts of the area and thus, they became a polyglot group of mixed blood, habits, customs, religions and thought, whereas the Hunzan people, then and today, discourage outsiders from coming to live among them in their country. Then, too, I guess another important factor looms and that is that Hunza is not nearly as inviting from an economic viewpoint to a man coming from another part of the world to settle, whereas Nagir does offer many more advantages.

For me to assert that there are no mixed bloods in Hunza would be an untruth, because even in my travels about the towns and along the road, I saw distinct types that were not of the run-of-the-mill Hunzans. Some were distinctly Chinese and I am also reasonably sure that there is a fair amount of Afghan blood among the Hunzans, besides Russian—for, as you may recall, Russia is but a scant 14 miles away.

It is not my intention to try to build up a case for true-bloods as being the Hunzan heritage, for history clearly indicates that it is among the people of mixed bloods where the greatest advances are made in science, industry and the creative human arts.

In Hunza there are very few plains or expanses where farming on a large scale could be practiced. However in Nagir it is quite different. There were sections through which we passed that were wider than the eye could reach, covered with good soil that was carrying

a good crop of various kinds of grains, forage, vegetable crops and fruits. In Hunza this just doesn't occur. The terrain is steeper, more precipitous, more difficult and seldom if ever does a flat open area come within the limits of normal vision.

Then, too, Nagir has many more nullahs formed by the melting glaciers. Rakaposhi is located in Nagir and surrounding it are many snowfields and glaciers which are used, trained and harnessed to irrigate their country.

Indubitably, the fates and nature have been much kinder to Nagir than they have to Hunza.

Let me also tell you frankly that on many occasions the people of Hunza purchase or barter various types of food from Nagir. I asked the ways and means that were used in effecting these deals and found that in most cases money—earned by the Hunzans in service in the army, portering for expeditions and given to them as gifts—was the means.

One might gather from what I have said and even from talking to various people or natives of the area, that the Nagirwals and the Hunzans are deadly enemies. But that is not true. The people of Hunza think themselves much better than the people of Nagir. They do believe that they are handsomer, healthier, cleaner and are better husbandmen, but yet there does not appear to be any cases of conflict, physical or armed, between the two peoples.

I recall a little incident that may be of some interest. We rounded a spot—I guess it was 10 or so miles from Minapin—on the way up to Baltit and there we saw a decrepit, ragged looking Nagirwal. In his hands he held a pair of chickens. They were the typical chickens of the area—full grown but the size that our chickens are when they're half grown. He waved them in front of us as though indicating they were for sale or could be

had. We slowed down—we didn't actually stop—and our guide asked the price, or got into some hassle-tassle about them anyway. The discussion took place in Burushaski.

There didn't seem to be too much palavering and our bearers took the two scraggy birds and stuffed them into their coats—one each, just as we would stuff something into our inside breast pocket. The chickens' heads stuck out, but they didn't seem to make any great attempt to get away. I didn't see any money change hands.

Then the old fellow disappeared behind a thicket for a moment; it was a group of willows and other shrubs or trees growing there. He came back with a butchered one and he tried to press it upon me. I didn't want it, but the man was so earnest in his desire to present it to me. I didn't know if he wanted money or not, but he didn't seem to care. He just wanted me to accept the chicken. I didn't want to offend him and as pleasantly as I could I kept shaking my head. But he did not heed my protestations and tried to force the chicken on me.

Then I got off my horse and when I did, I more or less subconsciously began to rub the muscles of my legs. He quickly dropped the chicken and kneeled down beside me and began to massage my legs for me. I tried to stop him and my bearers intimated to him that I didn't want anybody rubbing my legs, but he insisted. When at last I got him to desist, we began to walk on and he followed us for two or three miles, still trying to give me the chicken. So I asked Sherin if he wouldn't take the chicken or get one of the other boys to take it.

He was undoubtedly the friendliest coot I ever saw in my life. He was as dirty as the dirtiest pig and

smellier than limburger cheese. But so help me, dirt, stink and all, he was a likeable fellow. If only we could have ducked him in the water and got a scrubbing brush and some soap, I probably would have enjoyed his company.

Somewhere near the next village he left us. He was almost in tears at the thought of parting. I had a quarter rupee silver coin in my pocket and gave it to him. He didn't want it but he thanked me at least 200 times for it. I'm sure he would have given me his lousy old shirt if I would have accepted it. As it was, he waved us good-bye with tears in his eyes.

The Mir of Hunza and the Mir of Nagir are on friendly terms, but I don't for a moment imagine that they are bosom companions. Yet the Mir of Hunza's wife, the Rani, is a Nagirwal. Her uncle is the present Mir of Nagir. In fact, through the centuries, while the people of both these states were at loggerheads with each other, the ruling class intermarried and were always on amicable terms . . . and so it continues.

I will quote here again from *The Autobiography of Sir Mohomed Nazim Khan, K.C.I.E*: "From time to time we have tried to have relations with Nagir that were friendly but they have never lasted, although there have been marriages between the ruling families of both countries. My father and Zafar Khan, Mir of Nagir used occasionally to meet and I remember well the formality of these occasions. Each would come with a large number of followers and would halt on his side of the river. On one occasion Uzar Khan came over to Hunza and there was a great feasting; on another the Mir came and I and some other people from Hunza had to go over to the Nagir bank of the river and remain there as hostages until the Mir returned."

The Hunzans do not only show their superiority over

the Nagirwals, but over others as well. The P.A. at Gilgit, in a discussion that I had with him, admitted that when the Hunzans moved down the valley to the Gilgit area, they showed their heritage by surpassing anyone else in the district when it came to working their lands and producing their crops. They worked harder, they worked longer, they worked better. They used their experience and intelligence to greater advantage, with the net result that they were soon buying more and better land.

So far only a few of the Hunzans have come down to Gilgit, but the native Gilgiti farmers are already showing their resentment. Obviously they find it difficult to compete with the Hunzans on an equal basis.

I compared the Hunzans with the Scotch people and I think the comparison has many realistic qualities. Both peoples live in a more or less barren, hilly, rocky, rough country. Both peoples have learned the value of being frugal and thrifty. They waste naught and want naught. They are chiefly outdoorsmen. They are strongly nationalistic. Then, too, they are physically independent and have little or no fear of anyone.

When I was talking to the P.A. I called the Hunzans "the Scotsmen of the East" . . . and I trust the Scotsmen won't be offended. In fact, they should be flattered.

Where I think the people of Hunza gain most of their superiority is in leadership. From the little research and reading I have done on the subject, it appears that for many long years the Hunzans have had good capable leaders—really strong men who ruled their people with a firm hand.

In reading the autobiography of the Mir's grandfather, one quickly sees that he was not only a man of action but one of ability, foresight and reason.

Now I did not meet the Mir of Nagir. Although I

wrote to him and asked if I could come and visit him, he did not reply to my letter. No, I'm not annoyed nor am I saying anything unfavorable about the Mir because he didn't answer my letter, but I would have liked to meet him so that I could speak more authoritatively about the many unfavorable statements made about him and his people.

However, I spoke to many people who knew the Mir of Nagir personally. I passed right by his official residence both on the way up and on the trail back. It was pointed out to me and I stopped and looked it over.

Whereas the Mir of Hunza is respected—not only in Nagir and Hunza and the entire surrounding country, but in most nations throughout the world—the Mir of Nagir is more or less unknown and does not even have any great amount of social intercourse with his own people.

Whenever I met a Hunzan on the road and spoke to him about the Mir of Hunza and the Mir of Nagir, he would hold himself erect and say through our interpreter something like this, "Our Mir is loved and respected by his people and everyone else. His name and fame have spread throughout the world. The Mir of Nagir, nobody knows of or likes him!" If this was said to me only once or twice, I would pay little or no attention, but a similar vein of thought and expression was portrayed on many occasions.

I think further that the Mir of Hunza has given a high standard and caliber of leadership to his people. It was apparent wherever I went. He made his people believe and feel that they were good people, that they were equal to the best people of the world and that they were cleaner, stronger, healthier and more intelligent than others, and he was not telling them anything but the truth! The Hunzans hold their heads high.

Therefore, it is my belief, one of the reasons for the Hunzan high standing throughout the world is due to the excellent quality of leadership that they have enjoyed for many years, and is being continued by the present Mir and his staff and family.

I don't want anyone to run off with the idea that everything I saw about the Hunzans impressed me or that I thought they were exceptional in every way, because that definitely is not true. I did then and I do today admire the people of Hunza for all the splendid qualities that make them outstanding people. Anyone who could live in the harsh, tough, back-breaking terrain of Hunza must be made of stern fiber. Yet they have their foibles and weaknesses as well.

You see there are no immigration rules or laws to stop them from going anywhere in that area . . . at least, there weren't until recently. They could have gone to China, India, Afghanistan, Russia, Pakistan or anywhere else where the pickings might have been easier. But their love of freedom and intelligence that told them they were better off than most people in the world, even though financially poorer, kept them on the mountain slopes that are the banks of the Hunza.

No book on Hunza would be complete to even a small degree, unless some mention was made of the fact that it was not always known as Hunza. In fact, back before the turn of the twentieth century, Hunza was known as Kanjut and the people as the Kanjuts.

From records that I have located, I learned that, when the rulers of Shignam came to Hunza, they called the valley Kanjut. That name remained until the time of the Girkis and they called the country Hunza, because all of the people were united like the arrows in a quiver. In the Burushaski language Hunza means "arrow."

CHAPTER 50

Flora and Fauna

My Visit to Hunza was not basically a botanical or horticultural visit, much as I would have enjoyed spending a few weeks hunting, searching, climbing, delving into crevices and peeking into and over the rocks, crannies, cliffs and river beds—yes, and fields and anywhere a bit of green could be seen.

The speed at which I traveled along the mountain roads was slow and tedious, but it was even slower because of my interest in horticultural specimens that I noticed here and there and which I stopped to examine. But my stops to examine the flora were not very frequent during the first few miles, due to the simple fact that there was not much flora to investigate, except the omnipresent Fog plant, which no terrain seemed to deter. Then of course, there was a great similarity in the flora and once I had seen a plant, I did not stop to investigate another of the same species.

However, I did stop often enough on plant examinations so that I was always a few miles behind my friend, Cec, who was not concerned with the flora.

I want you to understand that I did not do an exhaustive detailed study of the flora of the Hunza district. I am sure there are many, many more plants in the area than I have indicated or found. I just examined what I happened to pass and see. I definitely did not go out and search for specimens away from the beaten path.

You can take my word for it, the vegetation under any and all circumstances is definitely not spectacular. However, any of the plants that are found growing in this area most certainly should be hardy enough and virile enough to do well in most other parts of the arable world.

It is my belief that the flora of the Hunza Valley is neither varied nor numerous, apart from the fruit and nut trees which are in most cases not indigenous. The apricot, though, could be native to that part of the world . . . at least, that is what I gathered from my studies and observations.

Apricots were grown in the greatest number, followed by mulberry, walnuts, apples, plums, peaches and pears. Here and there I came upon a pomegranate tree. These, I am positive, are indigenous to the surrounding area, if not to Hunza.

The trees that I passed most frequently on the roads and trails and in the towns were eucalyptus, willow, birch, poplar and the oriental plane, sometimes called sycamore and known in Hunza as the "chenar" tree. I believe these are all native to the vicinity.

I was disappointed, surprised and even shocked to find the area completely devoid of conifers or evergreen trees. I saw one pine tree in the P.A.'s garden in

Gilgit. With the eyes of an eagle I scanned the roadways, the byways, the mountain slopes, the rocks, the cliffs, the highlands, the lowlands, but nary a conifer did I spy.

One day when we got to see a different slope of Rakaposhi, I looked up and there about two-thirds of the way up on its higher reaches or slopes was a cluster of trees and they looked like and must have been conifers. But wait . . . Rakaposhi, according to the records, is 25,550 feet high. Unless I'm as blind as a bat and cockeyed, to boot, that cluster of trees was at least two-thirds of the way up. I was standing at 9,000 or 10,000 feet. So two-thirds of the remaining 15,000 feet would be 10,000 feet. So 10,000 plus 10,000 makes 20,000. Am I trying to tell you that I saw trees growing at approximately 20,000 feet? The tree experts say it couldn't be. They would scoff, deride and ridicule my statement, for it is written and believed that the timberline is somewhere around 10,000 or 11,000 feet —or does that apply only in the North American scheme of things? Well, that might be in America, but I will swear and attest that it doesn't hold true in the Himalayas or the Karakorums. Could be that I may be erring by a couple of thousand feet or even three thousand but it would still mean that this copse or group of trees was at least 17,000 feet up. Yet I know, I feel, I am convinced that it must be 20,000 feet. I repeat this even at the risk of being called a lunatic. I've been called that before!

Other writers claim they saw pines on their travels in this district. I think they were just talking or trying to grasp something to describe in that bleak, bare area. I saw the one single pine tree I mentioned earlier in Gilgit . . . and it had been planted! Well, I'll have

to let you figure it out. I'm just telling you what I saw and what I think.

I admit that I would very much like to some day climb and find out exactly what those trees were, but Rakaposhi is one of the most difficult of all mountains on earth to climb. It took 23 attempts to conquer Rakaposhi. The first 22 attempts failed, but a British expedition succeeded in scaling her summit in 1958. One side is almost a sheer drop, so from that side I'll stay clear. Of course there wouldn't be anything growing there, anyway.

The ascent of Rakaposhi was accomplished by the British Pakistan Forces Himalayan Expedition, 1958. Captain Shah Khan, the Mir's uncle, was a member of the expedition. I quote from the account . . .

"Captain Shah Khan was a most important and useful member of the expedition. He personally selected our 6 Hunza porters, and being a Hunza man himself, in fact the uncle of the Mir, we hoped for great things from them. We were not in the least disappointed."

The expedition started May 12th from Gilgit and established a base camp on May 26 at 14,000 feet. It was on June 25th that two members of the expedition, Mike Banks and Tom Pattey, reached the summit, under terrible conditions of winds and drifts.

Varieties of shrubs in Hunza were more numerous. I saw a few wild roses just like any wild rose you see anywhere. The flower had a slight fragrance and was reddish-pink in color.

Then there was a plant that resembled barberry, except it had a blue berry instead of a red one. The berry was edible. I tried some and found the taste pleasing and sweet, but there was very little meat or pulp. It was practically all skin and seeds. It was much

more prickly than our barberry. In fact, it seemed to have 5 prickles for every one that ours have and they were longer and stronger and more painful.

I recognized a variety of honeysuckle, too.

Then, of course, there was the imperturable "chush." It was found growing everywhere. I understand that its orange colored berries, which vary greatly in size, from that of a grain of millet to that of a large pea, also are edible, although they weren't as sweet or as pleasant tasting as the blue barberry, as I call it.

Caragana seems to grow widely in the area. I saw caragana plants ranging in size from 10-12 feet to one that was barely 6 inches tall, replete with all the trimmings, including the ripened seed pods. I stood entranced and marveled at the sturdy little plant growing out of the bit of soil that had fallen on the surface of a rock. I was strongly tempted to take some seeds back with me but I was quite certain that if the seed were sown in our fertile soils, the plant would quickly lose its dwarfing habit and only because it was so tiny did it look so cute and appealing.

Tamarix grows broadly. In fact, it is the most widely seen plant, shrub or tree in the area. On a few occasions we stopped, rested and found a bit of shade and comfort under a tamarix thicket or bush.

Herbaceous plants were more common again. At varying places along the river bank could be found fairly extensive patches. There was "fog" to which I will refer a little later, and a most formidable looking thistle, that neither man nor beast nor insect could get close to without feeling the barbs. My guides and bearers all warned me to stay away from it. I wanted to get some of its seed and feel, handle and examine it. On a few occasions I was determined to investigate it thoroughly, but they actually pleaded with me to leave it alone. It contains poison, they told me, and it would

actually make me sick and my skin would break out in sores or a rash.

In truth, I wasn't much worried, but, on the other hand, prudence must be considered. I was a long way from home, with a medicine kit that consisted of a bit of bandage and some salve, and I was in no position to do battle with some unknown, dangerous and perhaps poisonous plant. So I heeded their entreaties and left that symmetrical, unusual, neat but murderous looking plant alone.

The plants that I actually saw in flower along the trail or in the fields were very few. There was the wild rose, the fog, the inconspicuous flowers of chush and the fringed gentian and a few poppies. Remember, this was in July and very few plants, shrubs or trees are in flower at that period.

Yet, I must bear in mind that from Gilgit to beyond Altit the difference in maturity would run about two weeks. While I ate some of the last of the cherries at the Political Agent's table in Gilgit, when I got to Baltit I was eating the first of the cherries that the Mir had picked from his trees of exactly the same species and variety. In fact, I came upon many peculiarities caused by the altitude and the proximity to the river. In one place the fog plants, for example, were in flower and in other places along the route, they had already formed seed pods. Again, in other spots the seed pods had already burst.

This is not unusual, because if you examine the situation in the Niagara District, for example, at Queenston the cherries are in full blossom when in Niagara-on-the-Lake, along the lake, the buds haven't even swelled. There is a difference of 10 days to two weeks between Niagara-on-the-Lake and Queenston and the distance is a scant 7 miles.

The plant that impressed me most was the fog plant.

I've tried to locate it in my botanical encyclopedias but so far have met with failure. It appeared to be an annual but such a robust growing annual I have never known before in my life. (It could have been an herbaceous perennial—I'm not 100% certain. But I do know it started from the surface because there was no old wood or old stems on any of the thousands of plants that I saw and the hundreds that I examined closely.

If you know the winter creeper, or euonymus, then you can quickly understand what this fog plant looked like. It seemed to thrive in practically any location that would give succor to a living plant. In some places it was small and compact. In other locations it grew large and sprawling. It grew out of the rocks and hung down. It grew against the sides of the mountains and climbed up. It resembled, in many instances, a low growing shrub, but it was entirely void of wood. In other cases it grew erect and in still other places I found it sprawling around the ground in a wide area, making an excellent ground cover.

It is my estimate that I did not come across more than 30 different types of perennials or annual herbs. I am sure you will agree that it is understandable that the flora of this area would not be wide or tremendous.

Undoubtedly the valleys along the Nagir side were more lush, looked better and were larger than the cultivated areas along the Hunza side. One of the reasons for this condition is the fact that the Hunza side is more precipitous and the walls of the canyon or mountains are steeper and more sheer, leaving less opportunity for soil to accumulate, be cultivated and grow plants.

In the homes, from my observations, and I made careful study of this aspect, I did not see a sign of one

single house plant. This applies to the Nagir side as well. Of course this is readily understandable when you realize that they have no glass or light. The only light they would have in a Hunzan home would be the bit that streaks in from the hole in the roof or through the doorway. This lack of light would not be conducive to growing plants indoors.

I recognized and found one lone dandelion plant and believe me, when I found it, my heart was glad, gladder than it would have been if I'd found a beautiful rose. It has always been my belief and contention that dandelions are found where'er plant life can survive and this plant bore out (to a degree) my lifelong contention. As long as a dandelion can be found, one need not fear starvation. The greens of the dandelion, especially when young and tender, make delicious salads . . . but remember, be sure to get the young tender shoots. The roots are roasted and ground, and they make a beverage that some authorities say is as good as coffee. The root can also be used the same as parsnips. Herbalists prescribe dandelion coffee for dyspepsia, gout and rheumatism and they claim, with sincerity, that it possesses most beneficial properties for such ailments. It is also recommended by the herbalists for kidney and liver disorders and Potter says it is perhaps one of the most generally prescribed remedies . . . "It may be given in any form but its beneficial action is best obtained when combined with other agents." Now besides all the above virtues, its flowers and milky stalks make delicious wine.

This one single lone dandelion—the only one I saw on my trek—had caught a foothold in a crevice of a rock and was growing on this steep wall. I felt like embracing it and pressing it to my heart. But if I had,

I would have crushed it, so I desisted. I'm sure I spent 10 minutes admiring, blessing and caressing that dear little dandelion.

So the next time you're in your garden or weeding your lawn and you go to raise your voice against the dandelions and perhaps take a weeding tool in your hands to play havoc with them and ruthlessly cleave them from your lawn and garden, think of Tobe pressing that lonely little dandelion plant to his heart . . . this poor, lone dandelion struggling against the harsh elements and millions of tons of hard rock on a little perch in the high Karakorums. There is Tobe speaking to that gold-headed flower and plant, as though it were a lifelong friend that he has met or encountered in an outlandish place—yes, there on the true roof of the world! Allow a drop of milk of human kindness to drip from your heart. After all, a dandelion has green leaves and a truly beautiful, soft, luxurious looking, golden flower!

* * * * *

I was almost tempted to leave out this part about the fauna in the Hunza area, primarily due to the fact that I didn't see much fauna. Not being a hunter, I didn't go after any animals and very few crossed my path. However, in describing the fauna of a country, I guess it is not absolutely essential that one see all of the specimens with his own eyes in order to describe them or tell about them.

I recalled that some years ago I took a trip through Alaska and the Yukon and, in a trek that encompassed well over 4,000 miles up and back, all I had to show for my perseverance was the sight of one moose. But that would not, as you well understand, indicate that there were no animals in the Yukon and Alaska area, because that area abounds with wildlife. So I'll have to let that yardstick stand for Hunza, too.

I didn't see any water buffalo in Hunza itself, but they are to be found in the Gilgit area and therefore I suspect they are to be found, if not in the principality of Hunza, at least in close proximity. Well, if you find water buffalo, then there is sure to be the Mana or Lali bird. It's a medium sized bird that is very much like our cow bird. He perches right on the back of the water buffalo and works away like a woodpecker, picking out the insects that infest the water buffalo's leathery hide. Thus, he prevents serious injury and disease from spreading from the hide into the flesh of the animal.

This is just another one of the myriad of intricacies that follow in the paths of Mother Nature—how she seeks to balance things for the benefit of all. Here the bird finds a way and means of obtaining food and nourishment and the buffalo keeps healthy and everybody is happy!

Ibex are part and parcel of the Hunza scene. So are the ovis poli or mountain sheep which are actually quite scarce, but are found if one goes high enough into the mountains. The Hunzans call the ibex "markhors." I learned that "markhor" means "eater of snakes," for the ibex, which are actually goats, are known to the people of Hunza for this habit. This also indicates that snakes are found in Hunza. As a matter of fact, every now and then one hears or comes across a snake on the trail. When this happens on a narrow trail high up on a ledge and your horse rears on his hind legs, pawing with his fore . . . 'tis not conducive to a long and boring life!

The Mir of Hunza is quite a hunter. He enjoys shooting and is a true sportsman. My friend, the P.A. at Gilgit, is also an ardent sportsman. Between them, they told me that they had bagged, at one time or another, crows, vultures, golden eagles, geese and ducks, pheasants (two kinds), chicoris (which are their partridge),

pigeons and doves. They also vouch for the fact that sparrows, skylarks, nightingales, canaries, magpies, falcons and hawks were part of the common scene throughout the district.

The P.A. told me that on his hunting excursions he has on a few occasions come across both brown and black bears and I know there are also leopards, because the P.A. presented me with the hide of one of them, which now graces the living room of my son's home.

Inasmuch as small animals are concerned, I don't think you'd find too many. They like to go where food is more readily available than is the case in the sparsely vegetated Hunza area.

I don't think burrowing animals would be common to the district, because one can't very readily burrow through rock, and that is what 99% of the Hunza terrain consists of.

Incidentally, the goats that are kept by the Hunzan farmers are not by any stretch of the imagination similar to the larger ibex that are found in the hills. The Hunza goat is a diminutive fellow that is bred for its dwarfness and ability to give lots of milk for its size.

Apart from the fall duck hunt when myriads are felled, and the occasional hunt with shikari to bring down the renowned ovis poli (Marco Polo sheep) from the 18,000 foot pinnacles, Hunza cannot be called a hunter's paradise.

CHAPTER 51

They Chose Years Ere Comfort

I WILL NOT go on record as stating that some Hunzans have sired children at the ripe old ages of 80, 90 or more, because I have no proof of such occurrences, although this information was relayed to me by some people of authority.

Yet, I would not disbelieve or laugh at that statement, because from my studies I have found that where the human body is fed natural proper food, the regenerating process in the body can be maintained for a long time. Yes, and all the faculties can be alert and keen well into a ripe old age. Most certainly the people of Hunza have lived and still live, in the main, according to the laws of nature.

I would, without hesitation, accept the fact that the people of Hunza are longer-lived than most people. Everything about their way of life seems to lend credence to the tales. I investigated, I asked questions and

I checked as thoroughly as possible and there are at least a dozen men in Hunza over 100 years old and no doubt a hundred over 90. Yet the oldest man that I met was 105 years old but by his appearance, his speech and his activity, he'll be around for a good many years.

No, I don't think anybody was trying to fool me about their ages. I can't see what they could gain by it. On the other hand, I don't think I'd be the easiest man in the world to fool. At least my friends don't think I would be. If and when you meet the Hunza people, you will find that you accept them as a fine, upstanding, honest race. Therefore I cannot see why they would necessarily lie about their ages. Of course no vital statistics are kept in Hunza and therefore they cannot offer proof by means of birth certificates concerning their ages.

I met a few groups of men, all of whom claimed to be in their 70's and over, and they were a mighty healthy looking bunch of individuals. Most certainly the average group of people in any part of America at that age wouldn't remotely resemble that fine group of Hunzans.

I don't think that is hard to understand. People who have been denied luxuries and who have had to work all their lives and spend a lot of time in the open air doing manual labor should be healthy, especially when they have good natural foods.

It is my sincere belief that the ages and the health of the people of Hunza have not been too greatly exaggerated.

It is possible that I have strange ideas, but I've always believed that physical work and exercise have a lot to do with a man's health. Well, in Hunza if exercise will make them happy and healthy, they should be the happiest and healthiest people in all the world. There

are, remember, no transportation facilities whatsoever, except the Mir's jeep which the citizens of Hunza don't get a chance to use. There is no other wheeled vehicle in the entire country. Practically every step is a climb or a descent. So no one could really accuse me of exaggeration if I were bold enough to say that they're probably the most active and energetic people in creation. It could hardly be otherwise.

To illustrate another proof of their hardiness, all along the trail we met people from Hunza walking barefoot—from young children to boys and young men and old men. While some wore shoes, most of them were barefoot. They walked over sand, over gravel, over stones, over plain dirt roads without any misgivings.

I watched them with awe as they ran, walked and skipped over these exceedingly rough spots and I was convinced they must have exceptionally strong, sound. healthy feet and legs.

On a few occasions I watched the Hunzans digging with a shovel. 'Tis done the ordinary natural way there —barefooted. That certainly proves, at least to me, that their feet are in wonderful condition. Most people in America can't dig worth a darn wearing heavy boots!

It is unqualifiedly a fact, in my humble opinion, that the people of Hunza owe their splendid vital good health in part to these sound principles—their way of life, their food production and the way they prepare the fields for their crops—all accomplished in a natural normal way. Civilization may have many advantages—great discoveries have been made, machinery has been invented that does the work of many, many hands. In this modern machine age, a man need only work a couple of hours a day to supply himself with all the food, clothing and shelter that he can possibly use, but

obviously this type of living has taken its toll. Thousands, if not millions, of men are dying at 40 and 50, struck down by heart disease, diabetes and cancer. Well, isn't it strange that these diseases are unknown in Hunza?

"For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" MARK VIII: 36

Of what use is it if man has leisure, food, clothing, the best and most comfortable of homes, if he doesn't have the years of life in which to enjoy them? What good is it striving, straining, sweating when you are young so as to have a pleasant old age, when there just won't be any middle or old age?

I'm not suggesting that anyone give up the comforts to which they are accustomed, but I would suggest that modern living has caused a softening or a decadence in the very fibres of our bodies, which is showing the result in the deaths of many men in their prime —at 35, 45 and 55!

If you had the choice of dying at 50 or living in Hunza under their austere conditions to be 80 or 90, which would you choose? Think it over. I know . . . you'd choose the 50 years of soft, modern, debilitating life because you are led to believe that it is a good life. Methinks you'd be making a terrible mistake. Not many men in America are smart enough to live to be 80 or 90. In Hunza it happens whether you're smart or not, because you can't commit suicide by eating. If you want to die by your own hand, you've got to jump off a precipice.

'Tis true, the people of Hunza do not have any of the modern doubtful blessings to which I refer, but they do have, for you and all to see, health, strength, endurance, a smiling and pleasant countenance and many years of life free of disease and sickness.

I would very much like to have you ask of me now a question such as this one, "To what do you attribute the health and the long life of the people of Hunza?"

In reply I would just love to say, and allow my voice to ring both loud and clear, "Their natural way of living! The way they follow nature's path!"

While the above is absolutely true, it is not the whole story nor is it that simple. The path or road to health and long life is not an easy road. No, it is totally unlike the paved, graded, banked highways that we know in the West. It is exactly like the Hunza Road through the glittering peaks of the world's highest, most perilous mountains.

Good health and long life seldom, if ever, come to a man by sheer good fortune, luck or accident. My observations tell me that health and long life, like the price of freedom, are to be had only by eternal vigilance. One must continually watch how he lives, how he practices field husbandry, what he eats and how much he eats. It is absolutely true that the people of Hunza use no chemicals either on their farms or in their foods. To begin with, they do not have the wherewithall with which to buy them. Secondly, it is problematical as to whether or not they would take to them. But as I have related, they have taken to salt and some sugar, so the chances are they may take to other of civilization's titbits and ways, if they get the opportunity.

Yes, I feel that I have learned the secret of the excellent health and long life of the people of Hunza. I did not learn this by accident, either, but it gradually dawned upon me and came to light when I combined my actual observations on the scene, my close and insistent questioning of innumerable people, and last but not least, from actual scientific research in an ap-

proved laboratory by a qualified technician.

Their food is natural, simple, unsophisticated, without any unnatural, inorganic, synthetic additives whatsoever. There is no fragmentation in the foods they eat. They do not separate any part of the wheat when they make flour, nor do they separate any part of the other grains when using them.

Due to necessity they do not cook foods too much, nor do they cook any food that can be eaten and enjoyed without cooking.

Food is a serious, all prevalent problem. The few trees that they have and that they can grow must be protected for food, shade and timber.

However, I must truthfully admit that the reason that the Hunzans do not cook their food is because of the scarcity and inaccessibility to supplies of fuel.

Vaccination is not practiced and, as far as I know, is unknown in Hunza. Pasteurization in any form is neither practiced nor known. Chlorination is unheard of. Fluoridation is unheard of. No coloring whatsoever is added to any of their food, not even their butter.

Up until recent years the salt used by the people of Hunza came from the Shimshal area, somewhere near where the Shimshal River and the Muztagh join together. This salt is unrefined and used just as it is mined from this mountain area. It obviously contains many natural so-called impurities.

The only wheeled vehicles—two jeeps, in fact—are owned and used by the Mir chiefly for bringing in supplies, when road conditions permit. Therefore one must walk for every chore. There is no motorized equipment used in Hunza with the exception of the electric light plant in the Mir's palace. Apart from what I have mentioned here, mechanization of any sort is unknown.

Both the irrigation water which they use on their fields and their drinking water come from the Ultar Glacier. Therefore, their entire water supply is glacial.

Their entire economy is dependent upon their agriculture and everything that is taken from the soil is religiously returned to the soil. Chemical fertilizers or chemical sprays of any type are unknown to the people. It may be possible that the Mir has used sprays in his palace grounds. He might have brought them with him from his visits abroad, but I saw none and, to the best of my knowledge and belief, none are used. I saw no insect infestation of any kind or type through my entire travels and investigations. In Gilgit I did see insect injury in a garden and it was apparent to me that the soil of Hunza was in balance and therefore it produced food that was balanced. Therefore, it is understandable, the people of Hunza are healthy!

The food of the people of Hunza is in the main, raw food. It is neither dissected nor desiccated, but is eaten in the whole. The only exception that I could find to this rule was in their milk. When they made butter, they drank the remains or the buttermilk. Of course, in due time, they ate the butter.

All children born in Hunza are breast fed for at least two years. Male children are often breast fed until they are 3 years old.

I do not intend to stress any one factor of the points mentioned above. I am submitting them to you for your consideration and study.

It is, however, my belief that their soil and location does not lend itself to mechanization and therefore their good health should continue. If they could mechanize, then they would not get the needed beneficial exercise which, as you can gather, is one of the important contributors to their good health and longevity.

The country cannot afford or support a greater population than exists there today. Therefore, they will have to practice birth control, which it is claimed they already do but with which I disagree, or they will have to send their youths out of the country, which, as a matter of fact, they are doing.

There is very little chance of finding or creating more arable land in the country. I believe they have practically every inch tilled now that is tillable. There is no land left in that part of the world that is yet to be broken.

Their land and their fruit trees are their whole life. Their health, pleasant dispositions and industry, which they possess to the highest degree, are their entire wealth.

Quarreling among children and adults seems to be something that doesn't exist in Hunza. I found close affection and love was the general, accepted pattern throughout the area. This is even more surprising when you realize that most of the houses in the villages are built practically one on top of the other.

It was clear to me that they knew no worries and that they create no worries. There was absence of jealousy, greed, covetousness and hurry. Their outlook on life is most unpretentious. They are proud people and do not grovel before anyone and they do not pretend to be anything but what they really are.

Every Hunzan farmer is completely self-sufficient, even though he might trade for something that is in short supply or that he would like to possess. He grows wheat, barley, potatoes, millet, cabbage, beans, onions, lettuce and occasionally a bit of rice. In their orchards they have apricots, apples, pears, walnuts and mulberries. Every family has sheep and goats and sometimes a cow or an ox, and occasionally a yak. They till

their own land. They spin their own wool. Then they weave it into cloth from which they cut and sew their clothes. However he can also buy or trade for woolen cloth or he can have his own wool woven for him.

They have little or no money. The few dollars that he might get during the year would come from the expeditions that congregate in the area and hire the Hunzans as porters. And they are unsurpassed at this difficult and arduous work.

A man has a right to inflict corporal punishment upon his wife if she nags him. Perhaps that is why the men of Hunza have that cheerful look.

The children are never neglected because the parents are always at home. Further, the children do their share of the work in the fields and are taught to do so from early childhood. This also eliminates juvenile delinquency.

The people of Hunza have splendid dispositions. They are genial, pleasant, smiling and cheerful. They have deep respect for authority, profound love of the land, affection, compassion and understanding for their neighbors and they are most hospitable to strangers. They hold their heads high, their chests out and they are strong, honest and hard-working. To me this showed clearly and positively that people can live and that agriculture can exist and thrive without chemistry, chemical fertilizers, chemical sprays or synthetic medicines and drugs.

They enjoy happiness without modernization, long life without doctors, nurses and hospitals, democracy without bureaucracy, law and order without police and self-sufficiency without money. Part of the answer, if not most of it, is their loyalty to and their faith in their land, a pure case of unremitting agriculture and putting everything back into the soil which was taken

from it the organic method of land use.

From what I have seen, I have deduced the fact that the people of Hunza use less fat of any kind than most people found throughout the world. Some nations may lack animal fats, but make it up by fats found in fish. The people of Hunza have very little animal fat and no fish, for there are few lakes in the area and the only fish that are found in the streams are those that were placed there, in an attempt to stock the Hunza and Gilgit Rivers and some of the nullahs.

They do get some fat from the butter that is made from the milk of the goats, sheep and a few cows and yaks. They also get a bit of fat from their walnuts and the kernels of the apricot seeds, neither of which can be considered to be high in fat content.

Lest you think that this lack of fat would have some effect on the people, let me stress that there are no more energetic people found in the world and they are continually active.

As soon as fall sets in and the harvest is completed, they carefully select and store and prepare their winter's larder. Then they divide and apportion all of their foods so they will last them throughout the winter.

An important addition to their winter diet is a gruel or a soup that they make from the various grains and this is eaten with their chapatties.

Dentifrices or toothpastes or powders of any kind are not used in Hunza. Yet the people have unusually fine teeth. False teeth, plates or dentures are unknown. So even at the expense of antagonizing the toothbrush and toothpaste people, it would appear that these implements and concoctions do not create good healthy teeth.

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I have debated within myself whether or not I should

make my findings public and there were many reasons why I felt that I should keep my findings to myself, the first of these being the fear of ridicule. My findings are so radical and unusual that they will no doubt be hailed as fantastic. Next, in this modern day a college degree seems to imply that when you speak, you speak with authority, with knowledge and with proof. For myself, I do not accept that theory, but it is accepted by the public by and large. I hold no university degrees. I am an empiricist. Call it quackery if you like—I won't flinch. I believe that the knowledge and experience gained through thousands of years is not to be treated lightly, that it ought not be discarded as soon as some pseudo-scientific fact is heralded by paid-for publicity in newspapers, magazines, radio and television.

Therefore, when the whole mass of statements and events are simmered down, they amount to the following: I have no axe to grind; I have no commodity to sell; I have no demagogic theories to expound; I am not a vegetarian nor a communist nor a capitalist; I do not seek a following; I am not trying to found a new religion; I do believe in helping my fellow man wherever possible, not by forcing my views upon him, not by brainwashing, not by repetitive jingles, rhymes or slogans, but by the simple expedient of reason; I seek to tell you what I believe, what I have seen, what I have learned and observed. Just how you use that information is strictly your own affair.

I have performed not only my duty, but my purpose, and that is to inform and enlighten you. If you do not see fit to use or accept the illumination, that is strictly your affair and I'll neither condemn nor applaud you. It could be that you regard this so-called philosophy of mine as naive or oversophisticated. Then I will agree that you have a right to your own opinion.

CHAPTER 52

I Could Teach Them Nothing

I WENT TO HUNZA to find something. No, it was not just one thing . . . it was many things that I sought in that far-off fantastic land. It wasn't as though I didn't know what I was searching for. You couldn't make me believe that, because I felt that I knew what I wanted and I would go to the ends of the earth to find it.

This is a world of give and take. I admit there is a class of individuals known as givers, but there is also a class—and these are by far in the majority—of takers. I still believe in the New Testament quotation that says, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

It has been my good fortune to travel over many parts of the earth's surface. I visited a large garden and nursery in Scotland. I observed that a few of their field operations were somewhat outmoded by the modern American techniques. I spoke to the superintendent and told him the way this specific task was done in America.

He quickly saw the light and put the new technique into operation at a considerable saving to his firm.

In Denmark I visited a large rose grower with hundreds of thousands of roses in his field. After a careful study of their modes of husbandry, I offered some advice to the owner's son, who was conducting me about the place. It concerned the budding operations. I told him of the practice followed in California. He was amenable and increased the always difficult-to-get-done budding operation by almost 50 per cent.

When I was in Belgium I brought to their attention that there wasn't much sense in growing the world's best nursery stock, if you couldn't get it to your customers in good condition. I suggested that they follow carefully the exact, splendid packing system of the Dutch, which, if followed, would enhance their reputation and their export to all foreign countries.

In France I paid a friendly call on a family of nurserymen who had been actively engaged in the nursery trade for well over 100 years . . . the son, the father, the grandfather. I noticed that they still used bell jars for propagating. I told them of the new misting techniques. They listened, went to work and profited.

Even right here in America I proffered some advice to a friendly competitor. He ignored it and I could just feel or imagine the thought in his mind as he said to himself, "What can that smalltime Canadian nurseryman teach me?" Yet many months later when he called at my establishment and saw a particular bit of work in operation, he clapped his hand to his head and said, "It takes two of our men to do what that one girl is doing!" And my reply was, "I tried to tell you that a long time ago, but you wouldn't listen!" The next time I visited his establishment he had adopted the suggestion to the hilt.

I could go on and give you other instances and I'm not telling you this to prove to you how smart I am, because no one knows better than I that I am neither smart nor brilliant. In fact, the skeletons of my boners lay stark, wherever I go, to remind me how stupid I really am. Therefore, I am sure you understand that I am not trying to convince you or anyone else of my questionable abilities. Yet I wish to convey an important objective and lay it clear and open before you.

So I went to Hunza. I walked through their small fields, their orchards, their cattle quarters, their homes, the flour mills. I saw them eat; I saw them sleep; I watched them work; I stood by while they played. And here, more than ever in my life, I watched the operations closely—more intently than ever I had watched an operation before. I wanted to be of help; I wanted to be of service; I wanted to contribute something. Days went by. I had ample opportunities to watch them on the trails, in their homes and in their fields. I watched their techniques. I gazed at their dress. With envy, I watched their stride and pace and bearing. I watched them ride.

I flatter myself . . . I believe I am a thinking man . . . of sorts. And long did I ponder and much did I think. Oh, how badly I wanted to contribute something to their welfare! If ever a man's heart and soul were set on doing something for someone, I wanted to give something to the people of Hunza. I am back home and months have gone by. Here, too, oft I have sat and pondered the question, "What can I do for them?"

Here I am—embarrassed, ashamed, puzzled, beaten! Wherever I went throughout the world I found, in one way or another, that I could contribute something to the welfare of that particular place. But for Hunza I

could do nothing. I could teach them nothing. They knew everything that I knew and much more. They knew how to live and how to eat, how to get along with their neighbors, how to live in peace and harmony, how to live without fear and want, how to remain in good health, how to exist in a troubled world, harassed on all sides by myriads of problems and hatreds, and yet remain aloof in peace . . . happy and contented.

I know I should be glad—I should be exultant—because I returned a better man, a wiser man. They have taught me much more than I ever knew before.

But I am sad and disappointed, I am frustrated because I could teach them nothing!

I learned—among, oh, so many other things—that a human being can live without luxuries, without doodads, knicknacks and modern conveniences. I learned that true happiness is found more frequently where ease, luxuries and comforts are unknown. I learned that material wealth was of little or no consequence, but peace of mind, health, happiness, self-sufficiency and longevity were far more important than convenience.

I must go on record as stating that wherever the power of the dollar is felt, life's true values fall out of kilter.

Let it not be said that I am advocating the austere life of the Hunzans for the people of the world. Any such thought would be utter nonsense on my part. In the first place, not one in a thousand of our Western peoples could stand it physically. We have been softened both mentally and physically and could never endure the austere existence led by the good people of Hunza.

Let me tell you something else. Gold is found in

Hunza. Yes, and it could be panned in fairly profitable quantities both from the Chalt and Hunza Rivers. In fact, people who go to work on these rivers collecting or panning gold are called "maroohs" but, though I spent many days on the trail, I did not see one single "marooh" on either the Hunza or Chalt Rivers. By that, it would appear that gold was not the "god" of the Hunzans.

If you wanted to show your affection or esteem for a Hunzan or repay him for a kindness, you didn't buy him a bottle of liquor or an expensive bit of jewelry or a motorcar. No, you just gave him a couple of sticks of wood. You couldn't give a native of Hunza a more pleasing gift.

True, I am not a trained scientist nor an expert in any field, but through the years of experience and buffeting by the kind or unkind fates I have gained some knowledge. Sad to relate, it is my contention that the Western world is not in a position to teach Hunza anything in the science of the humanities.

CHAPTER 53

Hunza Health Secrets

RIGHT HERE at the beginning of this very important chapter, I want to state emphatically that it is easier to remain healthy in Hunza than it is here in America.

I realize that this may sound paradoxical and that many people will question the truth and the validity of this statement. But I reiterate boldly and clearly that it is easier to remain healthy in Hunza than it is here in America.

I have been asked over and over and over again by people in all walks of life and by both sexes, "What is the secret of the health and longevity of the people of Hunza?"

"There is no secret!" I reply.

"Is there a secret or mysterious food they use in Hunza that brings about their good health and long life?"

"There is no secret manna, food or jelly that is used

in the process of creating health and long life in Hunza!"

Here I have summarized my conclusions, which I believe account for the superior health, the unbounded energy and the long life of the Hunzans. Call it a set of rules if you like. I prefer to believe that it is the common sense way of life adopted by an intelligent people.

(1) Their food consists chiefly of natural fruits, grains and vegetables. Meat is eaten only on festive and other rare occasions. While grains—that is, the whole grains—are stored, they are ground for use in baking and gruel, only as required.

(2) Their soil is maintained by natural cultural practices. That which is taken from the soil is returned to the soil—both vegetable and animal.

(3) Most of the people of Hunza, including women and children, work daily in the fields. There is no Sabbath or weekly rest day, although there are religious holidays and festive days. Therefore, they work seven days a week . . . and in most cases, from dawn until darkness falls. Therefore, practically all the inhabitants of Hunza do their share of physical work. There are few, if any, completely sedentary occupations in Hunza.

(4) Very little fat of any kind is consumed by the people. The fats that are used consist of ghee, butter, apricot oil and negligible quantities of animal fats.

(5) Complete absence of foreign additives. Nothing whatsoever is added to either the soil or the food of the people or the animals.

(6) Natural, unrefined salt was used by the people up until a few years ago . . . and this was an important factor in maintaining their health.

(7) No sprays or spray materials of any kind are used on their crops, and no unnatural chemical fer-

tilizers are used on their lands.

(8) All children in Hunza are breast fed. There is no specific prenatal care, and the good health of the mother is passed on to the infant . . . and the breast feeding gets the child off to a good start.

(9) All fruits and vegetables that are dried for storing have been exposed to the sun and air. No foreign substances are added or treatments used.

(10) Native herbs are used extensively . . . both as seasoning and as food.

(11) Glacial waters are the only waters used both for drinking and irrigation purposes. These glacial waters definitely contain many valuable minerals and nutrients, as revealed by laboratory tests.

(12) Apricot kernel oil is the most important source of fat. It is used in cooking as well as for salads. No solvents or extreme heat is used to extract the apricot oil.

(13) Natural whole grains are used broadly. There is no fragmentization in Hunza. While they do bake a bread, their chief form of bread is an unleavened type which they call chapatties. They are composed of whole ground grain made into a dough and rolled very thin. Then they are heated or baked slightly.

(14) Hunzans are light eaters. Their diet is comparatively meager.

There is no doubt that, if any human being were to follow the health rules of the people of Hunza, he could regain or maintain health. There is no magic formula connected with this set of rules. They are simple and to the point. In fact, they are so simple that most people will doubt their value. To these people I would say, "All of the great things in life—the important things and things of value—are invariably simple!"

In Hunza the following established Western health

processes are unknown and unused: chlorination, pasteurization, hydrogenation, inoculation, fluoridation.

The single most important food, as used by the people of Hunza, consists of dried apricots and whole ground grain mixed together to form a toddy or a gruel. This is actually drunk cold and is enjoyed by all members of the family. It is usually partaken of during the late afternoon or early evening.

Their other important foods consist of the following: potatoes, garlic, beans, peas, carrots, tomatoes and some leafy vegetables. In fruits, they have mulberries, apples, walnuts and a few plums, pears and cherries. Grapes are used chiefly for making wine.

They grow a fairly broad selection of grains: millet, wheat, barley, rye, buckwheat and a little rice. Lucerne or alfalfa is generally used for cattle fodder.

The Persian Walnut is the chief nut grown in the area. Almonds are raised, and their cultivation is increasing. A fair quantity of apricot kernels are used.

Ghee is used for baking and as a spread on their chapatties or bread—the oven-baked loaf. Sour milk, buttermilk and curd are a regular part of the diet.

Meat does not form an important part of the Hunzan way of life.

Most foods are consumed raw. The lack of wood or other heating materials probably accounts for the paucity of cooked foods in their culinary art.

There are practically no cases of overweight among the people of Hunza. The importance of this factor cannot be overestimated.

The path to health is a simple, easy-to-follow road. It is the most natural way in the world to the people of Hunza. However, to follow a similar path in America would involve complications, difficulties and many frustrations.

I have personally given the matter much careful thought and consideration. My conclusion is that, in order to follow the Hunza principles of good health, one would have to own a small plot of land or a farm . . . or dwell in a part of the country where one would be close to a supply of natural foods.

But there just isn't the faintest doubt about it. It is the sure road to good health and long life.

CHAPTER 54

Koropeen and Zardagarben Threaten Destruction

"I HAVE disquieting news for you," announced the Mir one day after one of our question and answer sessions. "There is quite a bit of danger that our most important bridges may be washed away within the course of the next few days!"

I gasped and looked at him in amazement!

"Yes," he went on with a most serious look on his face, "two glaciers—the Koropeen and the Zardagarben—because of the extreme heat of the past few weeks, have had huge masses of ice break away from them and these have slipped down to where their position is blocking a large tributary of the Hunza River, about 35 miles from here.

"These blocked waters have already formed a lake between the two glaciers, more than 9 miles long. The lake between the glaciers is now just about filled to the brim . . . in fact, reports have it that it is already

starting to overflow. Water is already streaming over the glaciers as well.

"About 30 years ago an event of a similar nature occurred during the reign of my grandfather, Sir Mohomed Nazim Khan, and in the sudden rush of flood water that followed, every bridge along the river was whisked away like a bubble. Much land was inundated and the damage was terrible. All of the lower lying roads were completely wiped out.

"We are fearful that this may occur now. We have posted a 24 hour guard and have arranged for a beacon so that he may signal if the trapped water breaks loose suddenly.

"While most of the bridges that have been built in the last few years have been constructed high enough so the onrushing waters caused by a breakaway will not harm them, the bridge at Hasanabad is much lower and will surely be swept away. This would mean that you could not cross there into Nagir to return via the road you came. You would have to take the old Hunza trail and it is most precarious, difficult, narrow, not in good repair and very, very high. It is a real escape route, but not fit for normal travel nowadays. Back a few hundred years ago it was used, but it is too dangerous and risky for travel and of course is only used in emergencies or by a few of the natives who are accustomed to it and who live in the outlying sections served by that road.

"It is not expected that anything will happen for three or four days yet and we are keenly on the alert. I have been notified that they will try to get two planes into the area to get a true picture of the situation from above.

"Now I thought I'd best tell you and keep you informed so that if it is important for you to be out

within a few days, you can make your plans accordingly. If time means nothing to you, then of course there is no danger or reason for you to be concerned. I felt it my duty to tell you the exact state of affairs."

Here I thanked the Mir very much for being so thoughtful and said, "Now I know the state of affairs, I believe we can be ready to leave in three or four days. As road conditions do not permit us to go on to Mizgar, I have seen most everything that I wanted to see, I have learned most everything that I wanted to learn and as for the few things that I still have in mind, I can accomplish them within the next 4 days and then we'll take our leave . . . with your kind permission, sir!"

"I know the difficulty you had coming up," the Mir said, "and that you had to walk practically all the way because of the poor horse you had. So whenever you decide to take leave I will lend you my horse and my brother will lend his mount to Mr. Brunton. Thus, you will be assured of a comfortable, pleasant and safe ride back to Gilgit."

"I don't know how to thank you for your kindness but I'm certainly going to take advantage of your offer. All being well and the fates being willing, we'll take off on Sunday morning."

"Whenever you think wisest and best," answered the Mir.

CHAPTER 55

Treasured Gifts

EITHER I AM most naive or I have an awful pile of unmitigated gall, because I kept harassing my fine and wonderful friend, the Mir, with continued questions. Luckily for me, the Mir is a most understanding man and he tolerated my questions. In fact, I sometimes believe he welcomed them.

I recall on this day we were chatting in his sun-living room and I said to him out of the clear blue sky, "Do you have any hermaphrodites in Hunza?"

A puzzled expression appeared on his face and he shook his head and said, "I don't know what you mean. I never heard the word before."

I smiled and said, "Don't let that make you feel too badly because most people, even native born English or Americans in many instances have never heard the word before either."

I started to grope for another word that would

describe what I meant, when I spied the doctor standing close by. So I called him and waved to him to come over, which he did. I then said to him, "Would you explain to the Mir the meaning of the word hermaphrodite."

Now, as I have told you, the doctor was a Pakistani but although young, he was learned, having both his science degree and his medical one. With a flicker of a smile on his lips, he translated the word to the Mir in Urdu.

A glow appeared on the Mir's face and suddenly he broke into a chuckle and then it went on to uproarious laughter. I stood by mystified. Even the good doctor wore an air of puzzlement.

I waited a minute or two for the Mir's laughter to die down and then I said to him, "Tell us the joke, too, so we can join in the laughter. After all, laughter is something that should be shared."

At this he broke out laughing again. So we waited calmly until he cooled down. Then I said, "Now take it easy and tell me just what the joke is."

Containing himself as best he could, he replied, "Why I've got one of those things you mentioned working for me right here in the palace."

Then we all began to laugh. When it was all over, he said, "Strange you would ask about a thing like that. Actually I know of one other one in Hunza. That makes a total of two."

"If you are interested," he went on to say, "the name for hermaphrodite in Burushaski is 'mukhanas' . . . but enough of this!"

* * * * *

After lunch the Mir said, "Come with me! I have something I'd like to show you."

He then led me into the room I've been referring to

as his trophy room. There, neatly laid on a long table, was a beautiful ornate set of silverware, a three piece tea service. It was the most unusual and elaborate design I'd ever seen. I recognized it as the leaf of the chenar tree, which is similar to our maple. I do not profess to be a connoisseur or one who appreciates objects of art, but I did recognize this as being something especially fine and unusual.

He said, "This is from the Rani and I. I hope your wife will like it!"

He then presented me with a most unusual cane. It is made out of some native Hunzan wood, white in color—chenar I imagine. The handle is made very ingeniously, so that you have something to hold firmly in your hand, as well as a place to rest your thumb. Then the entire length of the cane and the handle were studded at regular intervals with what the Mir explained were pieces of ibex horns.

Ibex are found in the hills. They are a wild mountain goat, usually found above the snow line. They are a good sized, hefty animal, standing between 3 and 3½ feet high at the shoulder. They're sturdy beasts as they well must be to live among the highest and most precipitous hills in all creation. For agility there is no animal that can match them. They are crowned with long ridged horns curved backwards, usually black in color. These tough, imperturbable mountain goats reminded me of the people of Hunza and I thought there was a great deal of similarity between them. They are, as far as I know, afraid of nothing.

I'm not a hunter—I didn't go after them. Some of the men said they could be found readily. Others said you had to go far up into the mountains in order to find them. But by the number of horns of the ibex I saw in Gilgit, Baltit and all along the route I traversed,

I was of the opinion that the ibex are quite plentiful, and if anyone went to Hunza with the idea of shooting game, he could without too much difficulty satisfy his bent.

Then, too, the rare ovis poli, the true Marco Polo sheep, can also be found in this area. While they are by no means easy to locate, if you took the trouble to arrange for proper trackers or shikari, I'm quite certain that within one or two days' travel you would find and shoot ovis poli. If you're going to try to tackle the Marco Polo sheep, make sure you're a good mountain climber, because they are seldom found below 16,000 feet and usually a thousand or two thousand feet above that.

I asked the Mir where the big difference came in between the ibex and the ovis poli. It seems that the ovis poli are larger with a body as large as that of a donkey and the horns have three distinct sweeps. Of course the ibex is a goat and the ovis poli is a sheep.

He wanted to know if I was interested in shooting them. I said, "No, thanks. There are many other pleasures I prefer."

I can understand and appreciate the shooting of game for food or clothing but for sport . . . well, I've always felt that a man can prove his prowess without slaying useful, harmless beasts. Let it be said in fairness to the sportsman and hunter that in most cases he protects, disseminates and raises more than he shoots and therefore he pays for his sport. If it were not for the true sportsman (and I am saying that qualifiedly and reservedly—the *true* sportsman) many birds and beasts that exist today would have been exterminated by wanton killers, who also sometimes parade under the name of "sportsmen."

I will go along further and say that the sportsman

who climbs the lofty crags around Hunza to bring down the Marco Polo sheep or ovis poli is entitled to his bag. But after all, who am I to deal so generously with the life of another animal?

Then the Mir had for me two Hunzan hats of the type that the men wear and also two women's hats, the latter brightly colored and very neatly embroidered. He also gave me a bolt of elegantly embroidered red silk, displaying a young man and woman, a bird of paradise and what was more appropriate, a yak. Then last but not least, laying beside the other items was a white hairy mass, which for the moment I did not recognize. It was a yak's tail.

Then he said, "There is a pair of typical native Hunzan shoes being made especially for you and they will be sent to you as soon as available. I'd like to send the shoes to you later, because I am waiting for some new hides which some of my men will bring down from high up in the mountains when they've had a chance to bring down some of the ovis poli. I want you to have the best."

"I guess I can wait for the shoes," I jested. "The ones I am wearing, plus another pair that I have in my knapsack, will carry me back along the Hunza trail, I think, but I certainly will be happy to have a pair of Hunzan shoes as another momento of my visit to your most enchanting country."

Then suddenly a thought occurred to me and I said to the Mir, "I notice all of your men are clean-shaven . . . that is, except for the occasional one now and then who has a little beard around his chin. Therefore I know for certain that you must practice shaving in Hunza. Yet I have seen nowhere a sign of a razor. Further, I'm reasonably sure that this is one part of the world that King Gillette has not invaded with his

safety hair removing instruments. So please tell me what kind of an instrument the people of Hunza use to remove the hair from their face."

"I'll be glad to show you!" . . . and with that, he displayed a homemade razor, one made by the smithy of the village. "Similar instruments are made by the smithys in the various other villages throughout Hunza," he went on. "Our religion recommends that our faces be kept clean of hair."

"I will also have a razor made for you and sent along with the shoes."

"Thank you very much," I said to the Mir. "I am very grateful. I was really and truly hoping you'd say that, because that is another item that I would love to add to my collection."

I didn't know how to thank him for all these very lovely gifts, but I was somewhat concerned as to how I'd carry them all the way home. It was absolutely unthinkable to ship them individually or separately because I certainly wouldn't want any of them lost.

With the exception of the silver tea service, the other items were things that I had specifically wanted and had mentioned at one time or another. The Mir had keen ears and each and every item that I had mentioned was there as a gift for me.

To my friend, Cec Brunton, he also presented a Hunza hat and a cane of a little different type.

Not being a hunter it is understandable that I would not appreciate an ibex or a Marco Polo sheep head as a trophy, but most assuredly I would hang or display all of the items that the Mir was presenting to me most conspicuously in my home. And if perchance my wife wouldn't feel that some of them were sufficiently ornate or perhaps were unbecoming to her living room, then I would proudly hang them in my office. In fact, I felt

even here that I would be happy to wear that Hunzan hat on my strolls during the winter around my home town. The fact that some of the villagers might think me a bit queer wouldn't bother me one iota, because I haven't the faintest doubt they think I'm queer anyway. So a little added fuel won't make much difference.

I hate to admit this but truth will out, so I might as well confess. I actually coveted a Hunzan spinning apparatus and loom, but I didn't have the courage to ask the Mir for one of them. I thought perhaps this might be a little too much. I was bothered by the fact that perhaps they needed it worse than I and I would be depriving them of it if I took it back to Canada with me. But I did want one and I tried to think of a way or a means of purchasing or getting one without asking the Mir for it. Perhaps my readers can understand my predicament. Here was a man who was doing most everything that a human being could possibly do for another, for me. I would have gladly paid him for the spinning apparatus and loom, but I knew he wouldn't take any money and if I told him I wanted it, it might be an imposition—I knew he would get it for me. So after debating the matter with myself in my mind—which took probably 5 seconds but takes 5 minutes to tell—I decided to let the matter rest for the moment.

CHAPTER 56

A Night to Remember

THE LAST NIGHT at the Mir's palace was one that will remain with me as long as I live. Most of the guests who were there would be leaving in the morning, including Cec and myself.

It was a gay gathering—probably the gayest of all the evening meetings. It seemed that everyone present wanted to get as much out of this last night as possible. I for one was genuinely sorry to have to leave the abode of hospitality and friendship that I had found in this remote part of the world. I definitely was not happy about leaving a house that had been the scene of so much graciousness and kindness, where every second had been pleasant and where every word that was spoken contained wisdom and was filled with tones of friendship and affection.

For almost half a century I have heard and read the phrase "dinner at eight" but I never knew that such a

custom was practiced. Probably I am only showing my ignorance, but I assumed that this was a custom practiced in merry old England . . . and, after the toil of the day was done and there had been the snitching and snatching of morsels of food at breakfast, lunch, tea and high tea, when 8 P.M. rolled around an Englishman would really need to get some food into his belly. I also suspect that an Englishman, be he the lord of a manor, the manager of a plantation or even a clerk or a diplomat, couldn't go about his duties in formal attire. From this, I gather, sprang the idea of dinner at eight, for then, after the high tea at about 5 o'clock he would have time for his bath and a complete change, culminating in the formal stiff attire, probably white tie and tails.

Both at the P.A.'s residence and at the Mir's palace, dinner was at 9 and by all customs, habits and indications, it was clear that it was another one of the carry-overs from the British rule and teachings. I further found this custom continued among the upper crust in Lahore as well and probably wherever the British rule had prevailed. What makes matters worse, as far as I am concerned, I found this dinner at 8 or 9 business was most pleasing to me. I reveled in it—I loved it! What could be sweeter than the gathering of family and friends to gab and feast where all was harmonious and one could speak and scold without restraint, within the confines of decency and common sense?

I thought I had best go into a bit of detail concerning this because I didn't want my readers to get the impression that dinner at 9 was the custom among the ordinary citizens of Hunza.

The only electricity in Hunza was at the Mir's palace and was provided by a Delco system using gasoline. In Gilgit the P.A.'s residence and the military installations

were supplied with electricity by the same means.

I want to mention this because I don't want any one of you running away with the idea that in Hunza electricity could be had for the asking. No, and there was no other means of heating, for cooking or otherwise, than that which could be had from wood. From my inquiries I learned that no coal has as yet been discovered in the area.

It was about 7.30 in the evening and we had already ensconced ourselves comfortably in the Mir's sun room, partaking of warmed nuts and a drink, when we heard a clattering of heavy steps coming up the palace staircase. It truly sounded like a troop of soldiers.

The Mir begged pardon of his guests, bounced up with agility and went to the door himself. When he opened it, in paraded a man followed by 6 boys. The Mir introduced them. The man was Squadron Leader N. A. Beg who was the principal of the government's military school at Hasan Abdal and with him were 6 of his cadets whom he had brought along for an outing.

When the Mir heard from the P.A. that they had arrived at Gilgit, he invited Squadron Leader Beg and the boys to visit Hunza. The boys were proffered fruit drinks and the Squadron Leader had his choice of harder drinks.

To illustrate the command of the situation held by the Mir and the Rani, we were informed that dinner tonight would be buffet style.

I would have much preferred the Mir to elect someone else to head the parade to dinner but I guess I should have felt flattered. Again, I was asked to lead the group into the dining room.

The ensembleage that paraded down to the dining room consisted of the doctor, Dr. Mohammed Yusuf Khan; Squadron Leader Beg and his 6 cadets; the

young Pakistani, Major W. B. Minza, who was attached to the Swiss expedition; my young friend, Jahangir; Sultan Ali; the Mir's two elder sons, Prince Ghazanfar Ali Khan and Amin Khan; the Mir's young uncle, Shah Khan; the Mir's brother, Ayesh; the Mir and the Rani; and Friend Cec and I. The dinner was not much different from the others . . . delicious food, splendidly prepared and served in magnificent style.

The conversation bounced like a rubber ball on a sea of waves, never still for a moment, and there was always something unusual, witty, racy or worthwhile being tossed about. In truth, there was never a dull second from the time we met in the Mir's sunlit guest room for cocktails and sweetmeats to the parade on into the dining room for our nightly banquet, and from there on till we took to the sitting room for our tea and then to bed an hour or so later.

Every dinner during our stay at the palace was an event. They were, without exaggeration, nights to be remembered. No one monopolized the conversation. It could be the Mir speaking or the doctor or myself or Jahangir or the Mir's young uncle, but whatever it was that was said, 'twas in practically every case worth listening to. The company actually complemented and stimulated one another. Every conceivable subject and topic was discussed and the complete informality of the gathering was a most unusual feature. One would gather or imagine that the people dining together had known each other for many years and were friends of long standing.

I've often wondered about the different people that I met at the Mir's palace. I don't know why but it struck me that they were not average or ordinary men. By that I do not intend to insinuate that they were gifted men or better men than others. It is just that in

their eyes there shone a light that just didn't seem to emanate from most of the men I have known elsewhere. This has caused me to wonder. Why would the men I met in this remote part of the world appear to be different from men I have found and known elsewhere? Then I seemed to come upon the true reason. These men were all dreamers. That is why they had that faraway gleam in their eyes. They were trailing the will-o'-the-wisp. They were searching for paradise on earth.

"Then I, too, must be of that ilk!" I thought to myself . . . and I asked myself, "Haven't you always been dissatisfied with the life you lead? Have you not always believed that there was something more to life than the mere filling in of each day? Did you not motor all the way up to Fairbanks and Anchorage in Alaska to see if you could find your own little dream world?"

Searching into my soul like this annoys me. I don't like anyone, even myself, prodding into my subconscious mind, ferreting out the deep, dark secrets that I have kept hidden from everyone, and sometimes even from myself. But now it appears that I have found myself out. I've always claimed to be a realist—one who faces the world not for what he believes or wants it to be, but for what it actually is. And here, unbeknown to anyone, I have had my own little creation all to myself. What is even worse, I've gone around the world hoping to find that my own little dream world actually existed somewhere.

I'm sure you understand that on this evening there was quite a gathering. I think there were close to 20 of us who paraded into the dining room.

When it comes to the preparation and laying out of food, I'm afraid there is little or nothing that we can

teach the Mir and his household staff. I'm sure that I may add, without fear of exaggeration, that practically all of us could learn much from their ways and means and methods.

It is all well and good to have a sumptuous repast in a modern hotel in America or in a palatial residence, but remember, we were in Hunza in a most remote part of the world, where all but the bare essentials of life have to be carried through the most difficult and arduous mountain trails found anywhere in creation.

I wish it were possible for me to describe in detail the splendor and elegance of the furniture, fixtures, tapestries and trappings that bedecked the walls, the ceilings and floors of these rooms in the palace and the grace and beauty that accompanied the laying out of the food—the dishes and the cutlery—complete with gleaming white linen tablecloth and napkins.

There was more than ample food for the partakers, and the capable servants, attired in regalia bearing the Mir's crest on their chests, saw to it that everything went off like clockwork.

The choice of foods was wide—almost as wide as you could find at the best of smorgasbords. A better dinner could not have been provided by anyone, anywhere.

After everyone present had consumed everything he desired, we again repaired to the living room for smoking and the sipping of black coffee of the Turkish style or green tea. The boys, and of course many of the men, did not smoke. I believe the Mir, the Squadron Leader and Cec were the only smokers on this occasion.

I was listening to Major Minza tell of some of his exploits with the Swiss expedition, when something caught my eye and I shook my head in disbelief. Then

I looked again. And what shocked me now was how I could have been so stupid as to have missed it before. I had been sitting in this selfsame living room every evening now, on more than half a dozen occasions, and I said to myself, "Incredible! But how could I have missed it before?"

There, nicely set against the wall, hung on both sides with tapestries, sat a piano . . . and a big upright piano, to boot! "A piano! In Hunza!" I said to myself.

Why, I swear that on some of these roads I had to bend my head and other times I had to stoop to avoid having my head knocked off by protruding or overhanging rock formations. Then, too, another time the road was so narrow and the rock mountain so close to the sharp, hard rock mountain wall, that it was all one could do to carry a pack on one's shoulder. But a piano . . . and full sized! Not the modern apartment size!

Well now, this was too much. So I queried the Mir who sat on my left, "How did that happen here? Or did you import piano builders from somewhere and have them go to work and erect it on the spot?"

He laughed . . . and his is a gay, communicable laugh.

"Now behind that lies a story," I said. "Let's have it!"

Then he told me, "When the British moved out in 1947, the P.A. at Gilgit was a good friend of mine. He'd had the piano brought to him from Srinagar. And as a parting gift he gracefully gave the piano to me. It took 24 of my best and strongest bearers 10 days to get it from Gilgit to Baltit."

"That," I added, "was a mighty achievement."

Whoever it was who had that piano originally brought in from Srinagar, 150 miles away by the map,

must have wanted a piano awfully badly, for I am incapable of calculating a more difficult route on the earth's surface than the trail from Srinagar to Gilgit. Getting it to Srinagar wouldn't involve too much effort as it could be brought to that point aboard a boat up the Jhelum River.

Therefore, the jaunt of the piano and the bearers from Gilgit to Baltit—a matter of a mere 68 miles—was but a pleasant sojourn by comparison.

It was at this time that Jahangir told me that he had decided to come along with us. He had been having some trouble the past few days with the heel of his left foot, where it had been chafed by the back of the heavy boot he was wearing.

Jahangir's home was in Lahore. He was a young lad of 17 years—handsome, intelligent, alert and possessed of sparkling good health and bubbling with energy. He was one of the top ranking swimmers of his country and held the championship in various strokes.

After an hour or so of pleasant chatting and exchanging of views and experiences, it was time to retire. I shook hands with the Mir and informed him that if it were possible, we'd like to be on our way by 6 in the morning and therefore, if it could be arranged, we'd breakfast at 5 o'clock.

"Of course. Everything will be ready at the hour you mentioned!" he said.

Bidding him good night, Jahangir, Cec and I, slowly and with halting steps, took leave of our gracious host.

CHAPTER 57

So Long--But Not Good-Bye, I Hope

WHEN WE reached the dining room at the appointed hour practically the entire group of the previous evening was there. Both the Mir and the Rani were present, of course.

This was the customary breakfast and, as usual, I chose the Hunzan bread rather than the chapatties. Somehow I never could take a liking to the chapatties, but I did eat them in places where there was no alternative such as Hunzan bread. Their bread is truly one of the most delectable breads I have ever eaten anywhere. They must use yeast in making it because it is not flat like a chapatty. On the other hand, it is not high like our bread either. It is an oval shaped loaf about 3 inches thick in the center and about an inch thick at the edges. Yes, it is made out of stone ground, untreated, whole wheat flour. I can vouch for that because I saw the actual wheat being ground into flour.

Then there was ghee or yak butter to be used as a spread. Most of them at the table selected ghee. I chose the white yak butter.

Western types of raw vegetables on the table are conspicuous by their absence. I had all my meals at the palace and the only raw vegetable on the table at any time was lettuce and the lettuce, the Mir informed me, was from seed that I had sent him some months prior to my arrival.

So it is clear that vegetables like lettuce, celery, cucumbers, cabbage, carrots, radishes and such are not generally used in this part of the world as a fresh salad with meals. I do know they use onions and peppers. The onions that I saw were of the green type and I recall being presented with a bunch of them by a youngster who popped out of one of the houses on the trail. I gave him a small coin as a gift or reward. The child couldn't have been more than 3 or 4 years old and he shouted with glee and joy to his mother, holding the tiny coin aloft for everyone to see. He seemed happier at the gift of that coin than any youngster I can ever recall. I'm sure the big hundle of green onions was worth many times what I had given him!

I believe this illustrates just how scarce or unusual money is there!

This was a sad breakfast for me because now I was on the threshold of leaving and I wasn't too happy to go from this enchanted place. I walked slowly down the long staircase that led from the palace and the rest followed behind.

There in the yard was the jeep with the driver and a few servants waiting and watching. Our baggage was placed aboard.

I left a sum of 40 rupees with the Mir to divide among the many servants who had given so graciously

and generously of their services.

Then, with sincere good-byes, good wishes and promise of the Mir to come and visit us in America, where I promised him the use of my home for the duration of his stay, the jeep was off!

We were following the same trail that we had come up on, only this time Cec and I were in much better shape than when we arrived.

'Twas hardly more than 15 minutes before we pulled up at the end of the jeep road. The horses were waiting. Mine was a big black heavy fat pony and, I quickly observed, a stallion, to boot! He looked a little bit too bold for me but the Mir had assured me that he was as gentle as a kitten, strong as a bull, fast, sure-footed and intelligent. The horse Cec was to take looked very much like mine except he was brown. They were two mighty splendid pieces of horse or pony flesh. There was another horse in the group which we presumed was to be used as a pack animal.

I noticed when Jahangir got out of the jeep and was walking towards the horses and bearers that he limped somewhat. He was still wearing the pair of heavy, thick-soled and metal heeled army boots with which he had set out from Gilgit. Somehow this reminded me of the folly of trying to beat a man at his own game. The people of Hunza have been living with and under these conditions for 2,000 years or more and it is somewhat superfluous to say that they would have gathered by now the right kind of footwear to put on their feet. And here is what I found.

Practically all of the children wore no foot coverings. They went about barefoot. This I do not mean to infer as being the case only around their homes, but on the mountain crags and trails as well. Most of the boys and girls were barefoot, but there were some who wore

shoes and these were similar to the general type of shoes that are worn in the West, except they didn't lace up in the front, but folded over and your toes stuck out. This type of shoe could be purchased in any of the shops throughout Pakistan and India and even the small town bazaars offered these shoes for sale. It was a sort of heavy-soled sandal, although the tops did have a little more leather and it wasn't quite as open as an ordinary sandal. These shoes are called "chaplis" and are best described by saying they are heavy-soled, sandal-type shoes worn chiefly by the people who live in or near the rugged mountain areas.

Another type of shoe that was worn (or should I say, foot covering) was the actual native type. They were made of soft leather. To me it felt very much like chamois or suede, but I know from questioning that it was made from ibex, sheep, cow or yak hide. The skins of any of these animals were used for making these shoes as well as other commodities. The soles, too, were soft but of a little heavier consistency than the uppers. They usually reached to about the knee and they were tied with a piece of string, usually around the ankle.

Occasionally I saw another type of foot covering and this was as old as time itself and consisted of rags wound around the soles of the feet and the ankles. I'm sure back before man learned to spin and weave, he used leaves and bark on the soles of his feet, as protection against the rough terrain and rain, snow and sleet.

I had already learned the reason for the open-toed affair. The fact that it allowed air to circulate around the foot is good enough reason in itself, but in the event of a pebble or a small stone becoming lodged in the boot, it could be shaken free without stopping and unlacing the boot and removing the stone. With the

open toes it could be just shaken out. These were the low or oxford-type footwear. Then the reason for the high tops on the other kind of shoes was clear. It meant that pebbles and stones and debris couldn't fall into them.

I learned, too, that in walking over trails of this type one should always have on shoes that were sewn and in which no nails were used. On more occasions than I can attempt to recount, I stepped on a sharp rock and the nail in my soles or rubber heels went piercing through the soles of my feet. I had to stop on each occasion, unlace and remove my shoe, then get hold of a suitable rock and bang away until I bent the nail so it would no longer prick the sole or heel of my foot. So if you ever contemplate walking on roads or trails of this type, remember my warning, make sure that your shoes are sewn and have no nails in them.

The pack animal that was prepared for us was good enough to ride—much better than either of the animals that we had come up with. So Jahangir decided to use this mare as his mount and he sent his guide scurrying about to see if he could locate another pack animal.

At the P.A.'s in Gilgit, Jahangir had told me that he was taking off for Hunza alone. Now here as we were leaving Aliabad, I found that a guide turned up and it was apparent from the words that were spoken that this soldier had come up with him from Gilgit. The insignia on his shoulder clearly indicated that he was a soldier in the famed Gilgit Scouts.

I asked Jahangir how come he had a guide and he then informed me that the Scout Commander had flatly refused to allow him to set out alone for Baltit. Apart from anything else, in deference to Jahangir's parents with whom he was friendly, he would under no circumstances allow him to make the journey with-

out the services of a guide.

I can assure you that the Commander carefully selected the man, too. Although he looked like a boy, he was tall—about 6 feet 2 inches—lithe, alert, in fact, as smart and as capable a type of human being or soldier or both as 'twould be possible to find anywhere. Not that Jahangir needed it, but he certainly was in "high caliber" hands.

Bearing in mind that the two ponies we had were stallions, I began to wonder if we might not have some trouble on the trail, because Jahangir's mount was a mare. To you, this may not appear to be a genuine source of worry, because in the West the horses used for riding are practically always gelded and this eliminates any risk of difficulty. So you either ride a mare or a gelding.

I thought to myself, "What would happen if either one of our stallion ponies began to get ideas on some of these high tortuous, winding mountain trails?" I knew from my reading that it does happen.

A man can work himself up into quite a stew by thinking of such things, and by now I was greatly worried about what would happen if my black stallion did become rambunctious on the trail. So I made up my mind that I would give that mare as wide a berth as possible.

I buried my worries by getting busy and snapping a few pictures of the type of houses that we found here at Aliabad. They didn't differ very much from those we found elsewhere. They were not as well built and as clean as those we had found at Altit, but they were still quite neat and tidy by most other standards. Practically all the houses are built one on top of the other, as close together as the undulating region would allow, and it sure was obvious that a person couldn't

keep many secrets from his neighbors. From what I saw, it was obvious that when a house was built in Hunza no attempt was made to level the ground but it was allowed to stand as nature made it and the house was erected according to the natural levels, dips, falls or heights.

As we wandered around the little Hunzan homes in this area, we had to climb up to get to this one, we had to drop down to examine that one and there were really no two on an identical level.

Then I remembered that the average annual rainfall in Hunza was 2 inches and to myself I thought, "Mighty good thing, because if it rained any more than that, what a quagmire this area would be!"

We heard the clatter of hooves and, looking up, we saw Jahangir's guide coming back and leading another horse. This meant we'd be ready to take off in a couple of minutes, so Cec and I worked our way towards the road.

Soon all of our belongings were firmly balanced on the horse's back and we were ready to start for the Hasanabad Bridge.

CHAPTER 58

Baltit to Chalt--A Long Hard Day

THE EXHILARATING morning mountain air and the expanse of blue sky, landscaped by undulating masses in the distance and sparkled with a wisp of cloud here and there, made the march seem like a living dream. How often since I have been home have I longed for a day to begin this way.

The climb into the mountains started the minute we crossed the bridge at Hasanabad. We were now taking the trail that had almost spelled disaster for me on the way in. Those twists, those turns, those climbs, those declines had just about worn my legs to stubs. Never, through all my years of work, had I ever known what the word "tired" meant until then!

As Friend Cec remarked a few days later when we discussed this part of the journey, "Never did I see you look so grim! If any man could be said to be dragging his rear, it was you when you reached the jeep!"

But now it was entirely different. I didn't regard the snaky curves and loops with distrust and misgivings as I had the other day. In fact, then, I remember hating every turn I had to take. Now, with a good mount between my legs, I felt elated, happy, cheerful. Even though I started off riding, I knew that I wouldn't ride very far because I enjoy walking too much. But, still, it was mighty nice to know that you had a good horse in case you needed it.

From the start in the morning we knew it was to be a hard ride if we wanted to get to Chalt in one march. There was a full 32 miles to go. It was actually 36 miles but I figured the jeep had driven us 4 of them so that left 32.

Neither Cec nor I discussed or mentioned it but I think we fully realized that, if we felt it was going to be too tough, we could stop off at Minapin which was but 15 miles away and would find the usual rest houses there. Yet, I couldn't see myself holing up at Minapin for the night. Why, we should be there shortly after noon, I figured, and I certainly had no intention of calling it quits then.

Besides, my recollections of Minapin weren't very appealing. It was the poorest looking and the dirtiest town of all we had passed through. We had stopped for a few minutes at the rest house on the way up and it had proved to be a disappointment. We couldn't get anything to eat there and the chowkidor expected a handsome donation because we stopped there and, I believe, had a glass of water.

Then, too, I knew that this was the stage for us to make time, as we'd have more protection from the sun because there were more trees in this area than there would be further down. Villages dotted the landscape as this was one of the more fertile districts and towns

and villages are invariably built where there are trees of one kind or another. So it was our best bet to tackle the sun while we had some protection against it.

I remembered also that in this area there were lots of nullahs and that conduits were found everywhere, so we could refresh ourselves with good fresh cold water all along the route. Further down there were very few nullahs or any other means of getting water except by marching down to the river's edge and this, friend, could be an undertaking!

At this stage the elevations ranged around 7,000 to 10,000 feet. I didn't carry an altimeter with me but I was informed that in some places we climbed to 12,000 feet. It certainly felt like it by the rarity of the atmosphere and the way my chest and lungs were behaving.

All through this broad area the mountain scenery is idyllic. It just can't be beat or improved upon, no matter where in the world you go. When I came up this selfsame trail on the inward trek, I was in no mood to appreciate beauty or mountain grandeur and I knew that I hadn't taken in very much. But now, I was determined to feast my eyes, my heart and my soul on the most beautiful, the most varied, the most awe-inspiring mountain vastness that is known to exist.

I was happy—I was carefree—I felt so light that I thought the horse wouldn't even know he was carrying a passenger. In all probabilities I'd never come this way again and I wanted that beauty engraved on my memory.

Through the years I had spent many weeks and months in the Rockies, from Alaska right down to the Mexican Sierras, and I believed the Rockies to be the most impressive range of mountains I had ever known. When I saw the Alps and compared them, well, there

was no basis for comparison. The Alps were pretty hills!

But here again was something entirely different. We flew through and over the Himalayas from Rawalpindi till we neared Gilgit and from the moment we saw the Karakorums I was impressed with their appearance of hardness, massiveness—yes, and their coldness, too, but they certainly weren't very cold here on our way to Chalt where the metallic content of the rock absorbs every bit of heat and seems to hold it. Whereas the Rockies are mainly grassed or timbered, the Karakorums are bare, naked and distinctly metallic looking.

Of course there are bare mountains in the rockies and there are treed and grassy ones in the Karakorums but it's the exception, in both cases, rather than the rule. Apart from a bit of grass or a few trees in an occasional valley, the mountains in general were bare rock. It is indeed a tribute to the courage, ingenuity and resourcefulness of the people of Hunza and other races who live in these rocky valleys, that they can manage to eke out an existence.

In the Rockies anything over 10,000 feet is rare and unusual. When you hit 12,000, 13,000 or 14,000 feet it is an event of major importance. But here in the Karakorums, when you are trudging along, everywhere the mountains are 14,000, 15,000 and 16,000 feet high. It seems that the ridges all around you are 12,000 to 14,000 feet, with something like Rakaposhi occasionally poking up at 25,550 feet. Even that is nothing of any spectacular mention, because within a few scant miles as the crow flies could be found ten peaks as high or higher and dozens or maybe hundreds somewhat smaller, but still much bigger and more impressive than most found in the Rockies and the Alps.

Just to illustrate my point I'll mention a few, starting at the Afghan border and working over to Singkiang

in China, and down a few miles to the Skardu district. This area covers a circle within a 100 mile radius of Baltit, but look at the peaks that are found therein. These are just a few of the ones over 20,000 feet high that are found in that small area:

Haramosh	24,270	Saltoro Kangri .	25,400
Mukorum	23,050	unnamed	22,400
unnamed	25,868	Saser Kangri ...	25,170
Kampire Dior ..	23,434	unnamed	21,270
unnamed	21,200	unnamed	22,891
Kanjut Sar	25,460	Nanga Parbat ..	26,660
unnamed	23,440	unnamed	21,870
unnamed	25,540	unnamed	22,200
Godwin Austen		unnamed	22,120
(K-2)	28,250	Rakaposhi	25,550
Masherbrun ...	25,660	Bilchhar Dobani	20,126
Gasherbrum ...	26,470	unnamed	21,907
Teram Kangri .	24,489	unnamed	23,890

This list was taken from the actual military map of the area. Nowhere else could I find anything as detailed.

It is a positive fact that so far there are more than 60 summits over 22,000 feet recorded in the Karakorums alone—mostly unnamed and unconquered—and remember, the Karakorums extend only for 300 miles.

I'm not trying to impress you with a mass of figures, but I just wish to lend credence to the facts that will bear out my contention that this is the most spectacular outcropping of mountains and peaks in the entire world and that this point has the right and probably the only right, to be called the true "Roof of the World."

Maps refer to this territory as the Pamirs. I think they say Afghanistan Pamir, Russian Pamir, Chinese Pamir. The word "pamir" in Persian means "roof of the world." If the world has a roof, then without ques-

tion or doubt, this area holds that lofty title!

I know that Tibet is called the "Roof of the World" but it is my contention that this is not right. Lhasa is at an elevation of approximately 13,000 feet and is surrounded by peaks whose heights are not more than 18,000 feet, whereas Baltit, the capital of Hunza, is located at an elevation of 8500 feet and the mountains surrounding it go well above 25,000 feet. So I don't think anyone can argue or deny that this, the Hunza area, is the true "Roof of the World."

At the time I visited Hunza, maps of the Kashmir and Jammu and Gilgit agencies were hard to come by and anyone holding them might be arrested and charged with being a spy by the military authorities in Pakistan or India, because that area is zealously guarded by both sides.

It was a major operation to get a map of that area showing the various territories, the peaks and the ranges and such, but with the aid of a good friend I managed to procure a very good one.

For anyone interested in mountains, glaciers, hidden valleys and such things as dreams are made of, this map makes fabulous reading and studying. Besides, you can daydream away pleasant, carefree, happy hours like mad, if so inclined. Try it! Your cares will float away like bubbles!

Profiting from the mistakes of the past, when we found a nice cool comfortable spot, we stopped to rest and munched on the sandwiches that were so kindly prepared by the Mir's staff for us to take along. They were put into a little tin box where they kept in good shape. I would have liked to eat more of the sandwiches but after I gave one to Cec and had one myself, I passed the rest along to the guides and bearers. (Jahangir carried his own provisions.)

Actually, I think this in many ways is a mistake. Anything that you bring along for yourself on a trail like this should be kept for yourself and the reason is clear and obvious. On the trail both coming and going neither group of bearers or guides offered us as much as a nibble, whereas in every case anything that we had we passed along or shared with them.

The reason I contend this is wrong is simple. They are in their own territory. They know where food and water are available. I know, as I saw them procure it when they wanted it. In our case we were up against a stark, high, blank wall and had to ask for, drive for and pay for every morsel of food that we got on the trail.

If I were doing this selfsame job over again, I would plan my travels without worrying or consulting them one iota. Their opinions, their judgment and estimations are completely unreliable, when it comes to distance, time, height, depth, temperature—yes, and even dangers!

Now I'm not referring to the people in the category of the Mir or the P.A. or Jahangir. I am talking about the average citizen that one meets along the trails or in the towns or villages. While you are supplied with a guide and bearer or bearers and you feel you can rely upon them, they do not take into consideration that you are a stranger, a tenderfoot, and know little or nothing about the terrain and the place to which you are going.

I'm not trying to impress you with the fact that these people are ignorant because they are not ignorant. It is just that these things are beyond their ken and you must rely upon yourself and prepare accordingly. They have been ordered or hired to guide you to a certain defined place or to look after your horse and that is all they will do—nothing more!

This does not mean to imply that they are unreliable or unfriendly, because undoubtedly if you remained with them for any great time, you would become friendly with them and perhaps a feeling of camaraderie or loyalty would spring up. This belief has been confirmed by my conversations with people who have traveled through similar territories over longer periods. But in cases like this, where you hire a man for a day or two and you can't talk his language or make yourself clearly understood to him, the chances of getting any great amount of service are rather remote . . . that is, beyond the call of regular duties. In fact, I have learned and found that they will do only what they have to do and even getting this done will often take reminding!

The collapse of my friend on the first day out of Gilgit would never have occurred had we taken charge of the situation ourselves and stopped and rested every few hours for a few minutes, like any individual with common sense should have done. But we relied upon our bearers and guide. We were tenderfeet and stupid ones, to boot!

We were now beginning to feel like veteran mountaineers. It's funny how quickly a man can learn if his life depends on it. We weren't going to make the same mistake that we made coming up. This time we had no guide—just bearers—although Jahangir's soldier could be taken as a guide. In fact, he was probably better than most guides.

However, we were confident enough about the situation to carry on without any guiding or leading. I'm not trying to give you the impression that we were smart guys. It was just that we found out that there was no cause for fear or anxiety and once you beat that feeling, then you can go on through most anything.

From what I have learned about mountaineering, I find that this principle generally is true. When you know the natives and appraise and understand the country you are in, the rest is just a task. It may be a difficult one but a task that, with good management and a bit of luck, can be accomplished.

In this instance we had good horses—the best. Secondly, we knew and understood the regions through which we must travel. Then, we had prepared a bit of food. But on top of it all, we were masters of the situation and we were not depending on anyone else!

The worst part of the day was from about 10 A.M. until 2 P.M. After that the sun and heat slowly headed downwards.

It was about 1.30 when we went through Minapin. This is normally the first stopping place from Baltit. We'd been up and about and on the trail for almost 8 steady, heat-filled hours, but we never even considered the idea of staying there.

However, this was where the owner of the pack horse lived—the one that Jahangir's guide had managed to procure at Kerimabad—so we had to unload it. Jahangir dismounted and the luggage and all the trappings were carefully tied to fit around this horse that the Mir had sent along as a pack animal.

I took no part in the proceedings. Jahangir and his guide, as well as the two bearers, did the job and they did it right, unlike our first experience when we left Gilgit. We hadn't gone a mile along the Gilgit River when we began to have trouble, and hadn't we been at least half awake, we would have lost some of our belongings.

Here it was different. Whether it was due to the fact that we had Hunzan bearers, as compared to Gilgitis,

or the fact that Jahangir and his guide were on the job, I don't know, but the loading of the horse was done properly.

"Why don't you arrange for another pack animal?" I asked Jahangir.

"In the first place, I don't know if I can get one. Then it would take a lot of time, especially if we want to make Chalt before night."

"But how's your foot?"

"Oh, I think it'll be all right," he said, smiling. At the same time he flexed his toes by standing on them a couple of times to see how his sore, chafed heel was taking the jolt.

"I know little or nothing about the mountains and climbing but it would be foolish if we went on and you ran into difficulty, when, by waiting a few minutes or even an hour or two, we could save you pain and trouble."

"Oh, I'm confident everything will be all right," he replied.

"Anyway, I'm not riding very much. So that hefty pony is available any minute you want him."

"No, thanks. I'll get along without him. I feel fine."

Now I had the feeling that Jahangir was somewhat annoyed at the Mir because the Mir had neglected to send along a horse for him. However, I have no proof or knowledge of this because first of all, Jahangir hadn't asked for one and secondly, he had come to Hunza with a guide without horse or pack animal and therefore the Mir would not rightly suspect or know that he wanted one to go back with. So all this may be pure conjecture on my part, but that was the impression I got and that's what I'm telling you.

I had met Jahangir just as soon as we landed at the P.A.'s residence in Gilgit. I didn't know who he was

nor did I care. He appeared to be a fine young lad right from the first moment and that's all that mattered.

He told me of some fantastic expedition he had made into Bengal State in India. He spoke of head-hunters and primitive people with whom it was dangerous to associate, but I had only met the boy an hour or so before he told me all this and I felt that it was a cock-and-bull story or a configuration of his mind. You know what I mean . . . the typical young boy who wants to impress people. But I showed neither disbelief nor doubt. After all, I had no reason to offend the handsome, clean-cut boy who was being very kind and sociable. In fact, right from the first time I set eyes on him, I liked him and my fondness for him grew and turned to admiration and respect as I knew him longer.

Eventually, when I visited the lad in his home in Lahore a few weeks later, he gave me a copy of his article that had appeared in the leading newspapers of his country. It was a mighty fine article, well illustrated with shots of the people and many interesting scenes and illustrations of the places he had visited and it ranked with the finest articles that we find in our best publications. I felt inwardly abashed to think that I had for one moment doubted the lad, but then, who could visualize or imagine that a 17 year old boy had traveled to such remote, dangerous parts of the world by himself?

Then, on top of this, I found that Jahangir was a son of one of the finest families in Pakistan. Nowhere in my travels did I meet a more wholesome, congenial family and household.

In spite of the heat, the climbing and rarefied air, we felt quite good and knew that from now on the sun would be slowly moving along and the heat would be lessened. Strange but true, the human body is a mar-

velous instrument and quickly adjusts to varying conditions if given a fighting chance.

A few miles out of Minapin the road narrows, and then you cross a fairly long stretch, where you are walking along a rafik and this rafik is built, it seems, upon absolutely nothing. There is no ledge on this part of the mountain. It might have been there at one time but, if so, it has fallen away. So upon narrow rock wedges or pieces of steel forced into the cracks or faults on the rock face of the mountainside, this slate block road has been built, layer upon layer of flat stones.

Cec was ahead of me as usual and as he rode along this man-made ledge, it looked anything but secure. I followed. I think I held my breath over the entire hundred and some-odd feet and I wished that I had got off my horse and walked over this stretch. In predicaments like this a man should never be encumbered by a horse.

Then, too, the ledge was so narrow that there was little or no alternative but to look down and see the winding river, who knows how far below? I was too frightened to calculate.

There were other spots that gave me palpitations—roads that soared upwards, floating in space—and till I started to descend onto a road that had some substance under it, I was breathless—plain scared!

I'm no hero, but I certainly don't like to think of myself as a coward. Maybe I am, for I admit that this piece of road frightened and worried me and I felt mighty good when I had left it behind. I wish I could say that I rode over it at a gallop with a laugh and a chuckle and a "he-de-ho," but that narrow man-made ledge and that swirling rock-filled river a thousand or more feet below didn't make me feel like any hero.

I don't know why I didn't notice this treacherous

defile on the way up but I didn't. Perhaps I had other troubles or maybe I was too tired and weary.

Then we kept going down, down, down, until we reached the side of the river bed.

You will note that I often say we walked on the river bed. So let me explain. In places where there is a narrow gorge, of course, the river can't spread out and therefore it rises greatly in depth. But in most places there is ample room for the river to spread and where it spreads, it leaves a lot of sand. I would imagine the river would be at its broadest, deepest and mightiest during April, May and June. In July and August you would have only the melting glaciers to feed it, whereas earlier you have the accumulation of snow added. Then, too, when you have a spell of hot weather, you would get more water. Even in the space between the days going up and the days coming back down, we noticed the change in the width and depth and force of the river waters.

My horse was a dandy. Now I'm no judge of horse flesh, but this beast left little, if anything, to be desired in the way of a pony. Yet, even with that I didn't care to ride too much. Normally my weight is about 190 pounds but I lost weight quickly on the trek and at this time I weighed 175 pounds. That's a good chunk of weight for a pony to carry, even though he was a good fat one. Actually, he showed little sign of distress except on one or two occasions on the real steep climbs.

However, I enjoyed walking so much that I still didn't want to ride if I could help it. Besides, if I rode for even an hour, my posterior began to ache. Of course that just goes to prove that I am no horseman.

Cec preferred to ride most of the way. This may have been due partially to the fact that he hadn't completely recovered his strength, but it might also have been

due to the fact that when Cec was a young lad, he was a good rider and was fond of horses and probably was enjoying every minute of the ride. This gave Jahangir and I a chance to do a lot of walking together and we chatted and talked about every conceivable topic and, too, I had an opportunity to learn a lot about the lad which I could never have learned otherwise.

It was getting quite dark as we sighted the bridge in the distance—which we knew we had to cross in order to get into Chalt. It looked two or three miles away, but I wasn't being taken in by that. Judging by the time we'd been on the road from Minapin, I knew that it was at least six miles away.

An hour or so later there was still some light and I could see the distant spires of the poplars and perhaps some birches and willows. It was difficult to recognize them definitely and the patches that were usually green had more somber, bronze or golden hues because of the setting sun.

Somewhere, somehow I seemed to get the idea that in the mountains darkness came upon you suddenly, especially in mountains like these. I soon learned that this was not true. As the sun began to sink slowly in the west, in one valley it would get quite dark. Then half an hour or even an hour later, when you would expect it to be darker, it would be quite bright. This was quite understandable when you take into consideration the changing positions of the mountains, depending on the route you are traveling and the aspect of the sun.

When at last we climbed the final slopes into Chalt, it was 10.15 P.M. While we were all dog tired and groggy, we had found the evening march almost pleasant, if you can use that expression when you are really weary and hungry! The only food that we had

had all day was that part sandwich from the Mir's lunch box and an apricot or two that we snitched as we went under an apricot tree here and there—and those were green and tasteless! I was looking forward to a good bed in Chalt and some hot tea or soup, some eggs and fruit.

CHAPTER 59

The German Karakorum Expedition

OUR HOPES and visions of a good night's rest at the bungalow in Chalt were blown sky-high!

It was 10:30 in the evening and we'd been on the road for 16 hours. Actually we'd been awake for more than 18 hours. Believe me, it had been a long grim day! We dismounted . . . I had been awfully glad of the opportunity to ride the last two miles! My bearer appeared in much worse shape than I.

We looked about at the scene that greeted us. It was one of confusion. The place we had driven into and where we dismounted was a sort of a semipaddock but I could see no other horses or beasts of burden. They might have been quartered elsewhere. Around the bungalows and the bungalow courtyard or garden proper was a theatre or circus of hustle and bustle or it might even have been babel. I am hardly familiar with the right expression for this instance.

There was scarcely a spare foot of space in that entire area surrounding the rest houses. We knew without asking questions that there wasn't even a remote chance of finding peace and sanctuary in the rest houses themselves. Experience had already taught us that the rest houses belonged to those travelers who got there first and I have no quarrel with that principle.

We must have been a sorry sight, standing there surveying the scene. If we appeared or looked any more forlorn and neglected than we felt, then we certainly were a decrepit appearing group.

But Dame Fortune had not abandoned us yet. Someone had evidently seen our party drive up and recognized us, for in a few moments we were surrounded by Dr. Berger; our handsome bearded friend, Herr Klamert; Dr. Neureuther; and Willy Bogner. Along with them they had brought another gentleman, to whom we were immediately introduced. He turned out to be the leader of the expedition—Dr. Schneider.

Now we knew the cause of the seeming pandemonium. 'Twas the entire German mountaineering expedition who had moved into Chalt earlier in the evening!

They couldn't have been more friendly, and they insisted that I come sit at their leader's table. Then they wanted to know what they could do for us.

Well, actually I had had one half a sandwich from the lunch the Mir had had packed for us plus two green apricots and Cec had had the same . . . plus a lot of water from the nullahs. That was the full extent of the food we had eaten since 5 o'clock that morning. In a moment pots of tea and biscuits were brought. I know I drank at least 15 cups of tea. No, I'm not exaggerating. And I nibbled biscuits.

They asked me if I would like something else to eat

and, for some unknown reason which I'll never understand, I declined, saying I didn't want to bother them or trouble them. I should immediately have told them that I had eaten almost nothing since 5 o'clock that morning. I don't know and can't explain why people act like I did under such circumstances. It was utter nonsense! Had I but said the word they would have brought me Wiener schnitzel, German sausage, probably sauerkraut and practically any of the other good sound solid foods that find their place on a German table. But I just said that tea would be fine and thanked them very much.

Our friends asked us from where we had come that day. When we told them from Baltit, they said, "Impossible! Why that's more than 30 miles!"

"I can't tell you exactly how far it is," I said, "but we came from Baltit."

"But you couldn't do that in one march!" they said.

"But we did," I repeated.

"Incredible," they chorused. "Most travelers are bushed when they do half that!"

"Well, I don't know whether we're supermen or stupid men, but we've come from Baltit since this morning."

"I've never heard of it being done by any travelers before."

I felt rather proud of our achievement which we hadn't recognized as an achievement until now.

Their expedition had come equipped with every conceivable piece of mountaineering gear and equipment imaginable. Every convenience was available. We sat at a good firm table with splendid utensils, a wonderful water bag with a tap (yes, a genuine metal tap—well engineered and fitted into the goatskin bag) good china cups and a brightly lit gasoline lamp.

Theirs was a most unusual expedition. It was officially known as the German Karakorum Expedition, 1959. It consisted of nearly 100 men and they intended spending 3 months in the area. One of their main purposes had been to conquer Diran. This yet unconquered peak lies slightly to the east of Rakaposhi. I have been unable to find out its exact height, but it is said to be very close to that of Rakaposhi. I expect that the German expedition will be back to try their skill again ere long.

But they admitted they had failed in their attempt. They claimed to have got within 250 meters of the summit, but then a blizzard or some other freak of nature occurred and blew their tracks and trail right off the map—with all the fury that the elements at 25,000 feet could muster.

Rather than risk any or all the members of the group making the assault, even though within sight of their goal, they decided right there and then to fight their way back. It turned out to be a most brilliant decision, because for the next few hours the fury of the storm would most surely have caused a disaster of great magnitude and all or most of the men involved might have lost their lives.

It was a pity that the lateness of the hour prevented them from going on when so near their hard fought for goal. Of course they could not tell at the start of the day, when they left their base camp at 23,000 feet, how far they would get but they would, of necessity, allow sufficient time to return to their base camp ere night fell.

Usually retracing steps takes less time than hard climbing, but even then one cannot be sure to find one's way back in darkness at twenty odd thousand feet, with snow and wind blowing a blizzard almost continu-

ously. And too, men who are tired, footsore, spent and weary after a day's climbing at extremely high altitudes are more accident prone.

The expedition was headed by Dr. H. J. Schneider, a geologist by profession. The physician of the expedition was Dr. Gottfried Neureuther of Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany. With him he brought three experienced mountain climbers—Erwin Stocker, Gerhard Klamert and Fritz Lobblicher. A professional surveyor, one Hans Baumert by name was also included in the company. Because of the language problems that are sure to arise, Dr. Hermann Berger, a most competent linguist and expert on many languages including Sanskrit, Urdu, Persian and Burushaski, had been induced to accompany the expedition.

The experience had neither phased them nor disheartened them. They were going on to do exploring, searching, climbing and it was obvious that the members of the expedition were having the time of their lives!

I was very much impressed by the ways and means and manner in which they handled the entire affair. If I had to or desired to go on a trip of this sort, I would unhesitatingly place myself in their capable hands.

They told us that for the following morning they had made a call throughout the area for 80 porters and, believe me, that's a lot of porters for the months of July or August. Most of the men in the district are busy on their farms. The Pakistani war office had warned this German expedition not to cross into Hunza for porters, so they had to depend upon the Nagirwals. It is claimed that they are not as good porters as the Hunzans.

Later I learned that, for the final, the highest and

most difficult ascents, Hunzan porters were somehow obtained and induced, by the opportunity of what to them would amount to fabulous earnings, to come across the river into Nagir.

Whether or not the hiring officials of the German expedition would know if a man came from Nagir or Hunza, I would not be able to say. Nevertheless, if they came in their natural way and clothed in their usual habit, I am sure I would have no difficulty recognizing a Hunzan from any other inhabitant of the area . . . nor would the leaders of the German expedition!

Not without reason would a man like Eric Shipton, famous mountain climber and author, say that the Hunzan men were better bearers than even the renowned Sherpas of Nepal.

From my discussions with Dr. Berger at the Mir's palace, I knew that he was keenly interested in Burushaski and was studying the language with a view to writing an approved modern dictionary and history of that strange tongue. It was, therefore, obvious that he would have a close association with the people and a deep understanding of their ways and mode of life.

The Germans have been doing quite a bit of climbing in the Himalayas and the Karakorums. You may think that the Karakorum Expedition was overcautious when they went back with only a matter of 250 meters or so left to reach their much sought after goal. But wait! Don't judge too harshly or too quickly. Let's take a brief hop over to Nanga Parbat for a moment.

It's located just a matter of 100 miles or so away via air and it's higher than Rakaposhi. Two German expeditions met disaster there. Not only did they fail to achieve their goal, but both times most of the members died from cold, exposure or avalanches. Details

concerning the actual disaster are meager and hard to come by. Either they don't want to talk about it or they don't know. Remembering these two costly incidents, it is no wonder that Dr. Schneider refused to risk his men, even though there was but a short stage to go.

A third German expedition eventually managed to ascend the crest of Nanga Parbat in 1953 and it was a most magnificent achievement. But, strange to relate, it was conquered by one Herman Buhl who happened to be an Austrian climber. A few years after, Herman Buhl slipped and fell in the Himalayas and was killed by the fall.

As I mentioned, Hindu Kush actually means "killer of Hindus" and was so named because so many Hindu people lost their lives attempting to cross its precipitous trails. Now it seems that Nanga Parbat is taking on the aspect, if not the name, of "killer of Germans."

I was so absorbed with the group, and Dr. Berger especially, that both Jahangir and Cec took off to forage some grub, and they found it or at least found willing friends, who gave them all they required. They assumed that I would have at least enough common sense to ask for food, so they didn't think anything about me.

I knew a good thing when I saw it and I felt that in Dr. Berger, I had found a man who could probably teach me more about the area and its people than any living individual. I wasn't wrong. Dr. Berger had gleaned and picked up so many things never before mentioned or known about the people of Hunza, that I was gobbling it up and really wished that I had as many heads as an octopus has tentacles, so that I would be sure to remember everything he told me.

Dr. Berger had a tremendous advantage over any

other observer who ever went to Hunza, in the fact that he could speak the language. He had spent a great deal of time on Dr. Lorimer's book on the Burushaski language and even before coming to Hunza, he had mastered it fairly well. So here he was . . . he could travel anywhere in the area, accost people on the road and question them, talk to them, laugh and joke with them and such. Therefore, to me, Dr. Berger was a rare, rare treat and I wasn't passing up one single moment as long as he was willing to chat with me.

I don't know how many hours we talked. The strange part of it is that the group didn't seem to break up. We were surrounded by four other men and they, too, remained, right to the bitter end.

Reluctantly, but realizing that it was well into the wee hours of the morning and I was probably holding up this entire group and even others, I thanked them and bade them good night. Then I went to hunt up Friend Cecil and Jahangir, as I had no idea where they were. I'd forgotten all about them when I became involved with Dr. Berger and the others.

I didn't have too much trouble finding them among all the sleeping figures, because most of the German group had tents. The more important members had large tents and the ordinary members of the expedition had sort of pup tents. But there were others . . . employees and guides . . . who did not have tents and soon I managed to find where Cec and Jahangir were stretched out in their sleeping bags. They had been thoughtful and kind enough to lay out my sleeping bag for me in the middle and both were still awake. I guess the rocky hard ground was not proving to be conducive to sleep.

The first thing I said to them was, "Gosh, am I hungry!"

"Hungry?" they said, almost together.

"Why, with all the food there," Cec said, "how could you be hungry?"

"It so happened that the only thing they had on the table was tea and cookies and I was too damned ignorant to ask for something to eat, even when they inquired!"

Then Jahangir said, "My guide knew a couple of the boys that were assisting the expedition and they provided us with real food and lots of it! Boy, we had everything we wanted."

Then he went on, with a grin on his face, "We did so well with our rations from the servants' end that we thought you'd be gorged with luxuries from the top brass!"

"Huh! Huh!" I grunted. "I certainly didn't cover myself with glory in this instance!"

With that I slipped myself into my sleeping bag and tried to appease my hunger with sleep. But 'twas a forlorn hope. My empty frame didn't take to that hard ground a bit and with the gnawing in my stomach, I waited unhappily for the daylight to come without falling asleep for a moment.

We were up again as soon as light showed in the sky and the first person to greet me was Dr. Berger, looking worn and bedraggled. He said he had been on parade all night from his tent to the so called latrine. Dysentery had struck and so far he had made eleven marches. He was groaning and holding his stomach with his hands crossed.

When we had parted in the early hours of the morning he had looked normal in every way and now, but 5 hours later, he looked like a wreck—a perfect example of what one sleepless night and a debilitating attack of dysentery can do to a man in short order. In fairness, I

do suspect that the going had been rough for the past few days and this was the pay-off.

I said, "I hope our dissertation of last night didn't bring this on."

He smiled through his troubles and said he was sure it wasn't the cause of his discomfort.

"Too big a chunk of Burushaski for one night!" I chided.

I walked over to where the leader of the expedition was haggling, chewing and bickering with the porters by means of an interpreter. I watched the goings on and every now and then I'd look over towards Dr. Berger's tent. He was still on parade.

Every minute or two one of the porters would be hired and tabulations made in the leader's notebook. Then the porter's cargo would be brought over to him. It consisted of a metal box weighing approximately 50 lbs. The boxes were 12″ x 12″ x 30″, as close as I could guess. They were exceptionally well constructed with a good firm lock.

I watched the hired porters as they strapped a box to their shoulders. Each one seemed to have a different method or technique. Those who had an extra rag or two would first wrap it around their back, where the box was going to lie. Those who didn't have any rags to spare just had one heavy long rag. The porter sat down with his back to the box and then, taking the rag in both hands, swung it behind him where it lay on the box. Then someone spread the rag so that it would cover and encircle the box completely. The bearer then grabbed firm hold of both ends of the rag and by wiggling his rear and his legs, he managed to stand himself up with the load, then bind the rag around his arms and off he'd go down the trail. I wondered how many feet, yards or miles he could carry that pack without

stopping for a rest, at least—never mind breaking down. But I never found out.

We watched, intrigued, as the porters were being hired one after another. Their original call was for 80, but by the time we left they hadn't been able to haggle out a deal with more than 50. They were still hoping more would turn up.

I thought it was time we were getting on our way and, when I got over to where Jahangir was standing, locked in earnest conversation with his scout, I realized something was amiss.

"Our bearers are turning back," Jahangir said. "They claim they were only told to go as far as Chalt, and, of course, they'll be taking the horses back with them."

"That's utterly ridiculous," I retorted. "It's inconconceivable that the Mir would instruct them to go only part of the way with us and then leave us stranded here."

"They say it was a very hard day yesterday and that their feet are blistered and sore and they want to go back," Jahangir said.

"Well, they can go back," I said, "but they won't take the horses if I can stop them!"

Then after a little further conversation between Jahangir's guide and the bearers, he told us that if they went back they would take the horses with them.

This time I was quite annoyed and I said, "To hell with them! Let them take their horses and get out of here, the lying, cheating dogs!"

Actually the loss of the horses would be no serious loss to me anyway, but the taking away of the pack animal would stop us dead—at least until a donkey or horse could be located. But I was damned mad at the time and perhaps the knowledge that it was only 17

miles to Nomal and the jeeps made me cocky.

However, at this point I was pleased (through my annoyance) when my young friend entered the act and said, "I don't think you should allow them to go back and leave us this way. It doesn't make any difference to me because I'm walking anyway, but I think they misunderstood their instructions. May I have your permission to have my guide phone the Mir?"

"It's O.K. with me, Jahangir," I said sullenly.

Truly, it is strange how, when you allow your anger to arise, your reasoning seems to be throttled.

"Healthy, strong, enduring Hunzans!" I thought to myself. "Why that bearer rode a lot more than I did and *his* feet are blistered and sore and the weaklings, the tenderfeet from Canada are up and raring to go!"

"Healthy Hunzans!" I snorted; that is, of course, talking to myself. But it's wonderful to be able to say these things to yourself and not to anyone else. Maybe that is the actual discernment in the quality of an individual. How utterly ridiculous I would have appeared to my friends and party had I made these denunciations out loud. Even if the man was acting contrary to instructions or had misunderstood something, it didn't mean that I should condemn him to purgatory. So I am glad that at this stage I did my haranguing inwardly rather than outwardly.

Jahangir spoke to his soldier and in a few minutes he was off to the hut where there was a phone. This is the one and only line, carrying one wire, that runs all the way along the river to the Mir's palace and, of course, to every settlement in Hunza.

When I first heard about the telephone system in Hunza, I was somewhat flabbergasted. It seemed to be such a strange and unusual thing to find a functioning telephone system on the "roof of the world!"

I thought it must have taken someone with a lot of enterprise or get-up-and-go to install such a system. Then I found out that it was due to the imaginativeness of the British. It not only proved valuable then, but it is still an essential and useful system in good working condition. In the old days it was maintained by the British government of India. Now it is maintained by the Pakistani government.

I often wondered what human being risked his life to string a wire over that impregnable cliff, gorge or summit. Sometimes the wire-carrying pole jutted out of a mountainside. Other times 'twas atop a towering cliff. Then again, a huge rock pile might be holding a pole in place across a wide nullah.

All along the route as we traveled, we could see the occasional pole and the one wire stretched across it. I found the wire strung across the most treacherous, inaccessible locations imaginable and I often wondered how the pole managed to stay up. But evidently it does. And if something does happen to it—and occasionally there is a breakdown—it is quickly repaired.

The system seems to have been placed in operation about 40 years ago, having been constructed by the British army in 1920. Today it is of inestimable value to the Mir, because he has a phone in every municipality in Hunza, and he receives messages from each one of these municipalities every day. Therefore, he is acquainted with what is going on all the time and he knows the whereabouts of every visitor and stranger who is coming into his country.

The Mir actually governs his tiny country by phone, for once every day he has a report from his "arbab," who is his agent who reports the goings on of the district to the Mir, although it is usually the Mir's brother, Ayesh, who receives most of the reports.

The line actually runs from the Chinese-Afghan border of Hunza right to Gilgit.

We waited about half an hour before the soldier returned and then Jahangir said, "The Mir gave specific instructions for the men to take us until we meet the jeep."

"That's clear enough! Thank heaven!" said I.

In the meantime, of course, the horses were not made ready nor was the pack animal prepared. It took another good half hour before this was done and we didn't get off on our travels until about 7 o'clock. However, we had no misgivings or great concern about this day's run, because we only had about 17 or 18 miles to go to Nomal and there the jeep was to be waiting for us . . . I hoped.

I went back to offer a few words of cheer to my friend, Dr. Berger. He was feeling a little better and was reading Dr. Lorimer's *Dictionary of Burushaski* when I entered his tent.

I told him I would be writing to him as there were many more questions I would like to ask. I also thanked him for the great deal of information about the Hunzan people and that area that he had given me. He had certainly spent a lot of time on his studies and observations and already he had become quite fluent in Burushaski.

By now the area was semideserted. That is, there were only about 20 people around instead of over 100.

CHAPTER 60

Chaichar Parri Again

WE WERE just nicely on the road after leaving Chalt when I said to Cec, "You know I've got some distressing news for you. Remember that overhead catwalk that the soldiers and the horses had to take?"

"I sure do!" said Cec.

"Well, that's 4 or 5 miles down the road and there isn't a snowball's chance that our road has been repaired."

I don't know why I thought that news would distress Friend Cec, because he took the heights, the climbs, the heat and the hardships without ever murmuring or complaining. You'd never even guess that he was climbing among the Karakorums, rather than walking about the countryside at Niagara. He seemed to be absolutely imperturbable. In passing on the news to him I was just expressing my own fears and disquietude. I was the one who was troubled not Cec.

For the next few miles I was occupied taking photographs and examining various bits of flora and, without realizing it, I had allowed our party to get some distance ahead of me. I'd then made up my mind that I'd best do some straight marching and pull up within hailing distance.

Just then I came upon Jahangir who was sitting at what seemed to be a road juncture . . . the one to the right went down and the other climbed into the mountains.

"We'd best speed up if we ever hope to catch up with them before Nomal."

"That's why I've been waiting here for you," said Jahangir.

I was mystified and asked, "How will that help us catch them?"

"This is a shortcut," he answered, smiling mischievously, "and an interesting one, too!"

"How do you know this is a shortcut?"

"Your bearer, that the Mir sent, mentioned it to me a mile or two back. He said that they would not take it, as the upper road was safer, that there are some very nasty places and ledges on the lower road. But he also maintained it was quite safe on foot, although not very good for animals. They turned left here."

"O.K.! Let's go," I said, tapping him on the back and then breaking into a fast walk.

I was very pleased to take this piece of road because it was something entirely new and different and, wherever humanly possible in my travels, I would take a new road, even if longer or more hazardous than the conventional one.

It seemed that the road led around the outer extremity of a small settlement, and there were a few presentable farms in the region that we passed through.

We next ran into a long defile and while negotiating it we had to swing sharply to the left, where the cleft opened and became slightly broader. We brought ourselves up with a jerk. There right in front of us nestled what had once been a jeep. We looked up to see from whence it had fallen. My heavens, it must have been 400 or 500 feet at least! I shuddered! We stood for some minutes in sorrowful silence.

"The Hunzan bearer told me I'd find a jeep here. He said it happened just a few weeks ago. There were the driver and his two children in the car. It was on a steep grade. He saw where the road had dropped away leaving an abyss, but he couldn't stop—the descent was too steep. He threw both of his children out unharmed, but there wasn't time for him to save himself."

The weight of the vehicle and the momentum of the long drop had forced the falling jeep into the hard rocky earth, so that the wheels and part of the radiator were imbedded deeply and firmly in the debris. Everything seemed to be intact . . . that is, nothing appeared to have been removed, except the shattered, broken body of the driver.

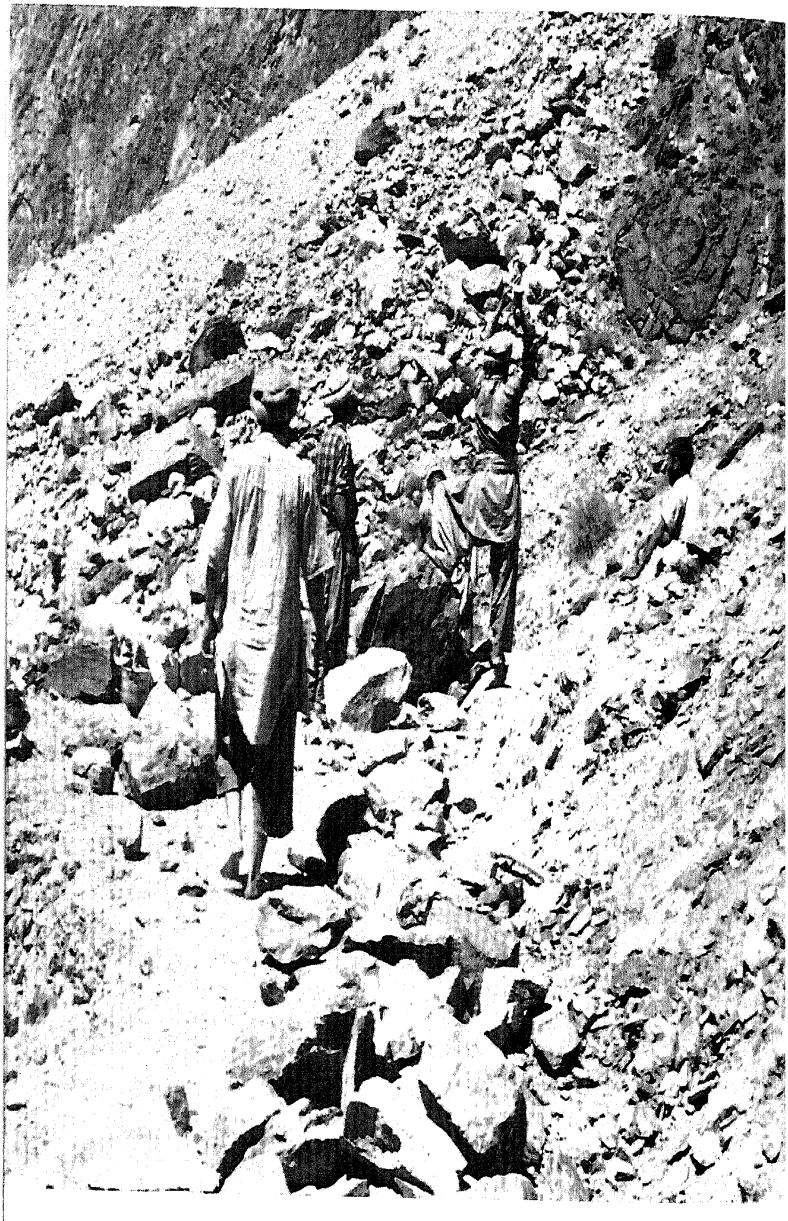
I turned from the scene with a deep sigh and, with a sardonic smile playing on my face, I said to Jahangir, "I still think the world's best means of transportation is a pair of good (human) legs in regions of this nature. They may be slower—they may tire—they may get sore and ache—but with proper care they're sure, safe and dependable."

We continued our accelerated walk but I was somewhat shaken by the scene of tragedy. Soon we joined the regular road and continued on.

After walking for almost an hour I said to Jahangir,

A jeep that fell off the trail.

One of Rakaposhi's many faces peeping from behind her foothills.



A crew of laborers using hand tools to repair the trail after it was wiped out by an avalanche.

"Do you think we are ahead of Cec and the bearers? It's funny we can't see hide nor hair of them ahead of us."

"You know, we were stopped, looking at that wrecked jeep quite a while and they must have gotten ahead of us—even farther than they were when we left them, although we did take a shortcut!"

It was just about then that our trail reached the summit of the mountain we were climbing, and I could see the road winding ahead of us for a mile or two. Looking back along the road, I could see very little because of a diversity of obstructions.

"I'm going to stay right here, Jahangir," I said, "because they couldn't be that far ahead of us. You can see all the way down that road. Even at the risk of losing an hour or two, I'd best find out once and for all whether Cec is before us or behind us."

We'd been sitting about half an hour when my bearer, riding the Mir's horse, hove into view. Jahangir asked him if the rest of the party were behind.

"Yes," he said. Sahib (meaning Cec) had indicated to him to go on and that he was going back. I realized then that Cec had feared something was wrong and he was going back to look for us.

"You'd better tell him to ride back as fast as he can and tell Cec and the rest that we're ahead of them."

The man turned and followed Jahangir's instructions.

Again, we sat and waited.

It was well over an hour before our complete party was sighted and, when Cec caught up with us, he was as mad as mad could be. He handed me a tongue-lashing which made him florid. I took it in silence!

"I thought that either you or Jahangir or both of

you had hurtled over a precipice or had broken your legs or maybe your necks. What's worse, I couldn't make myself understood by any of the three men I had with me. I wanted to send one back to investigate, but I couldn't make him understand me. Then when I started back looking for you, I didn't know how far I'd go or how far I should go!"

Jahangir timidly spoke up and said, "It's all my fault, Mister Cecil."

This was the only time that my good friend and companion showed any sign of being perturbed on the entire trip with me around the world, and I didn't blame him one iota. I had it coming to me . . . he gave it to me . . . and I took it!

Sure enough, in a few hours we reached the selfsame Chaichar Parri and the actual landslide was worse than it had been on the way up. When I say worse, please allow me to explain what I mean.

When we went across the first time, there were at least a few indentations where other feet had crossed before us and they had made a point here and there firm. You felt that when you put your foot there it would stay without slipping—at least until you moved your other foot elsewhere and got another grip. But, evidently another slide had taken place within recent hours because there was not a step or a footmark to indicate where anyone had gone before.

Again I made positively sure I didn't look down.

The pack horse was unloaded and the same procedure was followed as before—only this time we were imperturbed and behaved like veterans. One would have thought we'd been born and raised in the area.

I guess I have a guilty conscience, but somehow I fear that folks will believe that I have exaggerated the

seriousness of the road conditions and dangers that were involved. Therefore, I'll ask your pardon while I quote from E. F. Knight's "Where Three Empires Meet," written back in 1891 . . .

"A Hunza spy had been captured, prowling on our side of the frontier. He confessed that he had been sent to discover with what force we were holding a very strong position known as the Chaichar Parri, on the road between Gilgit and Chalt, a night attack on which was contemplated by the Hunzas. This position commands the road at a point where it is but a narrow ledge along the face of dangerous precipices, and so perpendicular are the cliffs falling away from it on all sides, that a small force holding this natural fortress with resolution, could not be dislodged without considerable difficulty and loss of life. Once before the Kanjuts seized this position, and, by thus isolating it, captured Chalt."

A Parri is a projecting spur of the mountain falling sheer into the river.

We still had 12 or 13 miles to go to Nomal where we hoped the jeep or jeeps would be waiting to pick us up. Before we left Baltit, the Mir informed me he had called Gilgit on the telephone and that the P.A. had told him there would be at least one jeep waiting for us at the rest house in Nomal, and perhaps one from the Commander of the Gilgit Scouts also. As we were not acquainted with the Commander and as it was at his home Jahangir was staying as an invited guest, I assumed that this jeep, if sent, would be for him and his soldier and their belongings.

With every succeeding step the sun seemed to get hotter. If I have mentioned the heat and the sun, and the discomfort they caused, frequently, I ask forgiveness, but the fact is, there are few places on the face

of the globe where one would feel the effects of the sun any more than he would right here in this area. I might except the Sahara Desert in this instance.

Perhaps it seemed so unbearably hot because one usually expects to be comparatively cool and comfortable when traveling in or through mountains. On the other hand, it might have been the combination of altitude, lack of food, the sun and the bouncing back of the heat from the hard, flintlike massive rocks.

No matter what the cause, it is still a fact that I felt the hot sun and the extreme heat more keenly here than anywhere I've been.

For some reason, that probably could be easily explained if one stopped to think about it, the whole party didn't seem to be very peppy or energetic. The hard, forced, pushing ride of yesterday was probably being felt now. As far as I was concerned, I hadn't had one wink of sleep during the night and very little satisfactory, nourishing food. So in my case I could easily understand it. But, on the other hand, I was somewhat buoyed up by the fact that I was traveling in one of the most fabulous pieces of country in creation. And if you think that isn't an important aspect, you've got another think coming!

Had I been able to stay put on the horse's back for a few hours at a time, it would have made quite a difference because I wouldn't have had cause to be so tired. But I had to choose between a pain in the rear or a pain in the legs, and the pain in the legs proved to be more tolerable.

Our gait—that is our horses' gait—was not as fast as a half decent casual walk because by now Jahangir, with his normal walking pace, was keeping well ahead of us. Of course he was young and strong and that made a lot of difference.

From now on to Nomal I well knew that we would have no shade whatsoever—I recalled our experience coming up.

We stopped at a nullah for a drink and I remarked to both Cec and Jahangir that we'd better get our bellies really full of water, because from now on I didn't think we'd find many places to get a drink. Again I was remembering my experience coming up.

So after we got our fill of water, we stepped up our pace a bit to where, according to my estimation, we were getting about 1½ miles to an hour between riding and walking.

It was obvious that the road crew had been over this part of the trail, for, while it was still definitely not "jeepable", we could see the hand of the Hunzan or Nagirwal engineers here and there in the comfort-giving, newly built patches of road. In some places it was done by driving steel rods into the mountainside and then laying wooden beams and then a floor on top of this. In other places they had found or chiseled a little ledge and upon this ledge built layer upon layer of stones carefully and neatly. Over top of this the road was laid.

At various points along the route I could see in the distance these man made outcroppings of wood or stone, as they jutted out from the side of the cliff or the mountain—hanging out over hundreds, and perhaps thousands, of feet of emptiness.

Whenever these rafiks or roads on air, as I called them, hove into sight, I involuntarily shuddered. Yet, when we came upon them, they seemed to be quite firm and strong . . . but I always walked over them very carefully, hugging the mountain wall on each occasion.

In riding through these mountain roads and paths,

it never failed but the horse took the trail on the outside. Never did a horse hug the mountainside. Maybe they did this just to frighten their riders. I was scared to death at first and I would quickly yank the reins, pulling the horse in from the edge. But the moment I released the reins, he was back again on the outer rim.

I don't want you to think for a moment that this is an exaggeration. I have discussed this with many men who have ridden through these mountain regions and each one said the same thing. No one has offered an explanation as to why a horse, and a well-trained beast at that, would always select the part of the road closest to the edge. If you should ever happen to ride a horse over mountain roads, you will find that what I am saying is absolutely true.

The mountain byways displayed but a meager variety of plant life and growth. Only occasionally could a bit of verdure here and there be spotted. A clump of woods or bit of bush where shade and comfort for man or beast could be found was almost, if not completely, absent. This would probably account for the lack of wildlife. I did not see even a sign of a wild animal, large or small. Yet I know there are ibex, ovis poli, bear and leopards in the higher hills, besides the yetti!

Perhaps this lack of vegetation was sort of a blessing in disguise because, wherever a bit of green did appear, the horse invariably headed straight for it, whether it was to the right or the left, in a crevice or cranny or on a ledge. Unless you were alert at all times, you would find your leg or part of your body swaying over a void that extended down to a raging river below, and this behavior on the part of my mount left me breathless and gasping.

Apart from the occasions where we were walking along the sand at the river level, the scenery was varied,

interesting, enchanting and the colors and scenes changed with every turn. It would be almost impossible to carry sufficient films to photograph every delightful scene that you passed. Besides, it would mean that you couldn't travel even a mile an hour.

I took hundreds of photographs as it was and missed many more rapturous scenes that were as good or far better, because I hesitated to stop my mount continuously or take the time. Then, too, the view was always a bit better a few yards back. But if one stopped and retraced steps at the sign of every good sight, he would not travel more than 8 or 10 miles a day. This would be fine if you had unlimited time. But who in this present day and age has unlimited time—except the Hunzans?

We had just finished a hard climb on foot and when I got to the top and looked ahead, there seemed to be a fairly nice stretch of level road leading into the town close by. I decided to have a bit of a rest, so I signaled to my bearer that I would mount. He got off and brought the horse over to me.

My bearer was lean like all Hunzans, but he was tall—probably over 6 feet. And being all bone and muscle, he must have weighed at least 175 pounds. He rode all the time that I walked so the horse was carrying a load continuously.

We went on to the town and every few feet or so we crossed over one of the open waterways, and each time my horse wanted to drink. At first I tried to dissuade him, but it took such an effort to keep him from the water, as he had a mind of his own, that I gave up and let him have a drink whenever he wanted it.

At this one spot where he chose to have a drink, the channel was quite wide—about 4 feet. The water was not more than 5 or 6 inches deep and below lay

pebbles and good sized stones. It was at this stage that both the mounts, the one Cec was riding and mine, decided to have a drink together. My stallion got his feet into the channel and began to drink. When he finished, I knew he'd have to lift both feet out of the channel and above the narrow wall and, therefore, he'd rear up—which he proceeded to do and which I expected. But for some reason that is hard to explain he did not veer to the right as I had anticipated he would, but landed with his forefeet in exactly the same place. At this time they slipped on the stones beneath the water and then he reared up like a flash, throwing me. My head landed on his rump—thump—my right foot came clear of the stirrups and my body swung quickly to the left, then under the horse's fat belly, until my head and arms lay on the stony ground right between the horse's feet. I was sure I'd be trampled to death.

Suspended, standing on my head I looked up into the horse's eyes and saw they were calm, without a trace of fear or viciousness. As I hung upside down I breathed a sigh of relief and I knew that I was quite safe. The horse stood absolutely still. Then I kicked my left foot free of the stirrup and began to get up.

By then Cec and the bearers had rushed over to me. They expected me to be stunned, kicked and heaven knows what else.

I got up and with a worried expression Cec asked, "Are you hurt?"

I said, "Nope! Not even a bump, a contusion or a scratch to show for my escapade!"

It was mighty lucky for me that the Mir's horse was so chunky. Had it been the horse I went up on, I would have had my skull split open on his razor-edged backbone.

By now I was feeling quite cocky. I had lived through being thrown from a horse and come out without even a red mark to show for my experience. In fact, I got right back on the horse and continued on the journey. I did this because I was inwardly somewhat shaken and afraid, and I knew that the only way I could beat it was by getting myself on the horse's back again right away.

From all indications we were now 4 or 5 miles from Nomal. The trail came down the mountain and broadened out into a river bed. This was one of the broad nullahs that feed the Hunza River and it has its source in the glaciers on the slope of the mountains to the right. But at this time the flow of water was rather narrow—25 or 30 feet wide.

From a short distance I spied what appeared to be a tree or a large shrub. You couldn't miss it. It stood out like a towering lonesome pine, only it was not so towering. It was the only bit of green in the entire area. As we came closer I could see, there under that lone tree, Jahangir, with all his clothes off with the exception of a pair of shorts. His feet were dangling in the icy water. We stopped for a moment to see how he was faring. His guide was wandering about waiting for him to finish his rest.

"You look mighty, mighty comfortable, Friend Jahangir," I said. "I'd love to lie right down there and enjoy that shade and cool water with you, but we're getting close to Nomal and I don't want to stop now. If I did, I don't think anyone could get me up and I suspect those jeeps will be waiting."

"Go ahead," he said. "I'll catch up with you!"

He signaled his scout to go along with us and on we went. About 3 hours later we climbed the hill into Nomal. Man, oh, man, was I glad! The difficult part

of our journey at last was over!

But in my exultation of joy, I asked myself, "Are you really glad it's over? Do you feel better now you're getting closer to civilization?"

I wondered . . . and I've kept on wondering ever since!

CHAPTER 61

Drawing Nigh

THE TERM oasis may conjure up visions in your mind, as it did in mine, of waving palm trees from which massive clusters of honeysweet dates were hanging, gurgling springs, cool green grass, delectable food and a well-earned rest. Yes, I could even visualize a sheik's palace where he and his band of followers come to rest from their nomadic summer wanderings or the waylaying of heavy merchandise and gold-laden caravans.

The first oasis from Gilgit going into Hunza, if an oasis it could be called, was the only inhabited spot—Nomal. It is 17 miles from Gilgit and the same distance from Chalt. The bungalow, while passable and perhaps comfortable by Eastern standards, was a far cry from the cushy, harem-like abodes that one can easily visualize.

But our previous visit to Nomal on the way up didn't foster any fantastic illusions or dreams of what we

might find there. Now we hoped, with reason, to see the magic carpets in the form of jeeps awaiting us.

If they were not there, it meant another day, for we would have to spend the night at the bungalows. Though 'twas but early afternoon, the 17 miles from Nomal to Gilgit were those miles that I dreaded the most, not because the trail was high or perilous, not because the air would be rarefied and the winding turns and curves would be difficult—no, I feared the scorching sun and the total absence of a bit of shade, for there wasn't a tree or a shrub to be found from here to Gilgit. Then, too, the idea of dragging my feet through that sand (for we would have no horses) didn't appeal to me. And above all, the trail from now on would be dull, uninteresting and bleak.

As we climbed the hill leading us into Nomal and we made a left turn at the top, the sight of two vehicles, parked one behind the other, in the yard was, to put it mildly, mighty welcome.

With braced shoulders and a jaunty air we headed towards them. We didn't know which was which or whose was whose. But as we knew the bearers would be most anxious to start homeward, we had them unpack the horse that carried the luggage and we loaded all the gear into one of the jeeps.

There was a group of men hanging around the jeeps. One, we knew, was the driver of one of the vehicles. Then one of the other men was the chowkidor of the rest house. But the others I did not know were probably just hangers-on. The driver of the other jeep was not present. Not one of the group could speak any English. They could understand a word here and there, but not sufficient to make it worthwhile bothering with.

I got in one of the jeeps and sat down in the front seat. Cec did likewise in the other.

When we had left Jahangir under the shade-giving shrub with his feet dangling in the nullah, he had instructed his scout to accompany us because he didn't feel that he wanted him hanging around waiting for him. This scout could speak no English either, so he was of no help to us in the predicament. On the way up we had had two men who could speak passable English, but now with Jahangir away, we were in dire circumstances. How I wished I had learned at least a few words in Urdu like food, milk, eggs, hot water and rest.

What's more . . . at this stage we did not know whether the jeeps had been sent for us, for Jahangir, for both, or if they were government jeeps or taxis.

Both Cec and I were very hungry. The last food we had had was at Chalt early in the morning and even then it was very little. As I sat, my hunger grew and had I known what to ask for, I would have tried to get the chowkidor to bring us something to eat.

However, I thought that Jahangir would be there any minute. So I impatiently waited. It was getting close to 3 o'clock now and I judged that it would take us an hour to do that 17 miles into Gilgit. I believed that the jeep wouldn't do any great speed through the narrow, winding, climbing mountain roads, but if worst came to worst, we could wait until we got to Gilgit for something to eat. While there were no restaurants in Gilgit, as we know them, I did know that there were places where you could at least buy a cup of tea.

The minutes ticked by and I was trying to doze in the seat of the jeep.

I do not wear or carry a watch for the simple reason that I don't care too much about time. But there is another good, justifiable reason: I can't seem to wear

one—something always happens to it. Either the band or strap breaks, or perhaps I smash the watch up against something but, for some unwarranted reason, I never have been able to wear a wristwatch. There is something about my wrist that causes any watchband or strap to break. I think it's something to do with the expansion when I clench my fist. Anyway I've never managed to wear a wristwatch for any length of time.

A pocket watch has even more things happen to it. I have tried them ever since I was a young lad, but it never worked out. Watches were not for me! I remember when I was 13 years old and I had a pocket watch given to me for my birthday. It was a gold watch . . . well, they say gold but it refers to the case being gold filled, whatever that means. But it wasn't new—it was secondhand. Nobody I knew in those days could afford to give me an elegant new gold watch, but a secondhand one was within reach.

I remember buying a fob, as they called it, for the timepiece, and I kept it in a little watch pocket which was tailored into trousers in those days. It was located just on the right hand side under your belt. Here the fob or medallion hung and acted as a grip or handle for your watch. I was very proud of this gift and for a few fleeting days I treasured and enjoyed its accuracy and elegance. But 'twas on a Saturday and I went to see a baseball game. While there I was caught short and had to make use of the lavatories. I made my way to one of the closed booths, unhitched my belt and, in the various maneuvers that are required, I heard a crash, and there on the cement floor lay my gift watch in a hundred pieces!

At the beginning of the Hunza journey a nephew of mine brought me a wristwatch as a gift. I told him I wouldn't accept it because I had no use for a watch

but, inasmuch as I was taking a trip and going around the world, I would accept it as a loan on the proviso that he would accept its return when I came back.

He thought the entire matter was silly, as he wanted to give me the watch. I was adamant and told him truthfully that I didn't want it, but I would take it and put it to use. Before I reached Karachi the steel band on the new watch had broken and I put it in my briefcase. There it remained until I returned home and gave it back to my nephew—with thanks.

Every few minutes I'd ask Cec what time it was. It had now got around to being 4 o'clock and still no sign of Jahangir. We had been waiting for more than an hour. I then turned to his guide and signaled or explained as best I could for him to go back and see what had happened to the boy. He obviously understood what I meant, for he turned and headed down the trail from whence we came and where he expected Jahangir to be.

Then we waited another half an hour and still no sign of the boy or the scout that I had sent to hunt him up. The location of the rest houses was such that you could not see any part of the road from there. By this time I could stand, sit or wait no longer. I told Cec I was going down to see what had happened to the boy, and started off immediately.

I walked out the laneway onto the road and headed towards the steep grade that we had climbed about one and a half hours ago. Then I knew why the road was completely out of sight. I hadn't thought of it before. On the left, as you began to make the descent, was a huge rock, almost a mountain in itself, that completely obscured any view of the surrounding area on that side. Nor was it the kind of a rock that you could climb. It was sheer right up.

I started off briskly . . . or should I say, the grade carried me down briskly. My mind was filled with misgivings and I was genuinely worried. I had developed a fondness for the boy that was quite strong, and I couldn't understand what might be detaining him. I knew there were no wild beasts, brigands, cut-throats or thieves in the area.

It was 6 or 7 minutes before I rounded the bend and there, a few hundred yards away, was my lad and his scout. Jahangir seemed to be limping or dragging his left foot. I stood and waited until they came up to me.

"Trouble, Jahangir?" I asked him.

"Sir," he said to me, with a sort of forced smile, "that little resting spot was so cool and comfortable that I was just loathe to leave it. I could have spent the whole day—yes, and the night, too—there, and enjoyed every minute of it, but I'll be all right as soon as I can get off my feet for a while and change shoes."

"Those are exceptionally heavy boots you're wearing, boy," I said. "I notice around here the men wear a comparatively light sandal or no shoes at all. Most of them go barefoot. While I always thought a heavy boot was ideal for this type of terrain, we should learn and judge by what the people who know what it's all about are doing. The men in these hills are probably the world's best walkers. In fact, I'm quite sure they are! And if they don't wear heavy boots, then I don't think we should. Maybe the military geniuses aren't so smart when they compel soldiers to wear these ultra-heavy boots. Anyway, you've got a bad foot and you'd best get off it as quickly as you can. Cheer up! Your worries are over. There are two jeeps up there waiting for us!"

"Yes," the boy replied, "my scout told me the news."

"It would have been nice had I been able to arrange for something good to eat for you while we were waiting but unfortunately, nobody up there understands enough English for me to get to first base. Cec is starved, I'm starved and I'll bet you are, too. I wish we had something to eat. When we get up there I don't think any of us will want to take the time required to have a chowkidor dig us up some food."

"I have some cheese and crackers somewhere in my kit," said Jahangir.

"Then what are we waiting for?" I shouted. "Let's get going and get at it! I'm famished!"

By the time we got to the top of the hill, Cec was standing there waiting. He, too, was getting concerned and was much relieved when he sighted us.

When we got back to where the jeeps were, there was no one around. The drivers were either having something to eat, or a siesta, or both—I don't know.

Jahangir sat in one jeep and then searched about in his kitbag and eventually came up with a can of cheese and a few crackers and as there was a conduit hard-by, we had the crackers, cheese and Hunza or nagir "pani." There really wasn't enough food for even one of us to get full on, but we shared it and our hunger was temporarily appeased.

We were now anxious to get started. We began to blow the horns on both jeeps. It took a few minutes—in fact, a long few minutes—before the drivers straggled out of different doors and came leisurely, unhurriedly, strolling towards the jeeps. We urged them unceremoniously to get us moving.

Now that Jahangir was back and all was well, we turned to our porters who were standing waiting for their good-byes, which, of course, would also include some sort of payment. While they were anxious to get

back, I had indicated for them to remain till Jahangir showed up. Actually, they had fulfilled their duties tolerably well and had it not been for the one incident when they wanted to go back and leave us, I would have felt most kindly towards them. As it was, I was thinking in terms of giving them the least I could . . . and I wound up handing the older man who I thought was the father 30 rupees. I know I would have given him at least 50 had it not been for that situation at Chalt that aroused my ire.

A thing worth mentioning about these Hunzan people is that they are totally unlike any other Asians, inasmuch as they never seek to ingratiate themselves with you. They don't seek favors nor do they fawn over you. They always stand boldly on their own and you quickly get to feel that they don't consider themselves inferior to you or anyone else. That spirit about the people of Hunza I liked very much.

The bearing of the Hunzan men is truly magnificent. Nowhere on earth do you find men who carry themselves so lightly and erectly, with handsome heads held high. They're the straightest-backed men that can be found anywhere . . . lithe, lean, agile, erect and strong. Even though I felt a little resentment towards this fellow, I could not deny that I admired him and, above all, he sought neither my fear nor favor.

It didn't take them long to pocket their rupees and be off down the trail back towards Hunza.

CHAPTER 62

Old and New Friends

JAHANGIR'S JEEP—the one that the Scout Commander had sent—pulled out of the driveway ahead of us and moved along at a more or less rapid pace. Then our driver, a rather small young man, started the motor and took out after him.

When we got a few miles out of the town, I began to watch the road carefully. In about 10 minutes I recognized the spot I was waiting for. It was hard to believe that about two weeks ago this location had looked like tragedy and the end of a sojourn for us. It was even hard to believe that the miles of precipitous trails covered with thousands of tons of boulders had been cleared by men's hands, without the aid of machinery of any kind, and that a jeep could now travel over it. A few short weeks ago we had to crawl over this terrain on our hands and knees or slowly and deliberately on foot; now we were traversing it by jeep!

Often in pondering a problem or a situation that took place some time ago, we are forced to believe that no situation is as bad as it looks at the moment. This situation I am referring to is when Friend Cecil collapsed. While it looked so serious, so desperate, almost unsolvable at the time, now it just doesn't seem to be very important or very serious at all. I know that when this specific event occurred I had felt that it was one of the major tragedies of my life. It seemed that there was absolutely no solution, that we just had to sit there and die, that there was positively no way out.

We had now reached the part of the road that ran right along the Gilgit River and the mountains were to the right or south of us, but quite a bit in the distance. Our jeep driver kept well behind the other, because the cloud of dust he was kicking up in the sand made close tailing impossible or inadvisable.

Now that we were getting close to Gilgit I can't say that I was enthused or bubbling over with joy. Yes, I did welcome Gilgit from the point of view of a little bit of good food and perhaps some useful rest but somehow I wasn't too happy about leaving Hunza. Although I didn't recognize it at the moment, it was just as though I were leaving something that belonged to me.

We reached the bridge across the Gilgit River. The jeeps have to go across it at a slow crawl. I had learned that this bridge was the longest suspension bridge in Pakistan and India. It was a firm, neat, well-built piece of work, but I wouldn't dare stick my hand out on either side of the jeep for fear it would be broken or chopped off by one of the many pickets or posts along the bridge. That just indicates that the bridge wasn't much wider than the jeep.

In the best or clearest kind of English that I could

muster at the time, I instructed the jeep driver to take us right down to the airport, hoping there might be a flight out at that time or very soon.

When we arrived at the airport, I got out and made inquiries. I didn't think there was much chance of a flight at that time of the day, but I felt that the least I could do was check and find out. Didn't take me much longer than the time required to get in and out of the jeep to find out there was no flight that day, but they would put our names down so we would be eligible to ride on the next flight out. With that I instructed the jeep driver to take us to the P.A.'s residence.

We drove through Gilgit, up the winding hill to the cantonment, and the driver drove right up to the P.A.'s door. The P.A. was away and his "chief cook and bottle washer" Shah Mirzah greeted us. But, as mentioned before, he spoke no English.

"This is an awkward spot," I said to Cec. "I don't think we can move into the man's house while he is away, even though I'm sure that is what he would want us to do. The best thing we can do is have the driver take us to the rest houses."

Shah Mirzah stood waiting on the porch as though expecting us to come up. There was a warm pleasant smile on his face and even though he could not speak to us, his being indicated, "Welcome!"

I could see and feel that he wanted to talk to us. But he, as ourselves, was helpless. There was nobody about who understood sufficient English to express anything worthwhile.

So with reluctance and actual displeasure I told the driver to take us down to the rest houses. You would think if I could make him understand that he was to take us to the rest houses that perhaps I could converse enough to talk to the cook as well. But it wasn't hard

to signal "rest house" and repeat it . . . they all knew what "rest house" meant.

Shah Mirzah just couldn't fathom our actions. I'm sure he felt that we were behaving in a most peculiar, unseemly manner. Perhaps he even thought that we didn't want to stay with him or disliked his service. But a man has to retain a semblance of dignity, and I just felt that we couldn't force ourselves on the P.A., much as we hated to leave the scene that had provided us with much comfort, pleasure and hospitality before.

We climbed into the jeep and as the driver turned towards the gate, I watched the puzzled sad face of Shah Mirzah as he saw us leaving.

When the taxi driver pulled up to the rest house I realized that we had no money—not one single rupee did we have left. Then how were we going to pay the taxi man and the chowkidor for the food that he might get us? I told the driver with voice and hands, as best I knew, that we couldn't pay him till tomorrow, when we could make arrangements to get some of our drafts or American money changed into rupees. He didn't seem to be much worried and drove away. He knew we couldn't get away, even if we had a mind to.

We carried our luggage over to the veranda of the bungalow. The chowkidor came out. He spoke no English, but by his motions and actions and words, I gathered that some other people had taken possession of the rest house. But as we made no move to depart, he went away and in a few moments came back with someone who could speak fairly good English.

We were then informed that some other visitors had taken possession of one of the rest houses and with it went the bathroom facilities, but we could have the other room. It had two beds in it and we took it. We had no alternative!

Cec and I then went down and bathed in the Gilgit River. When I say "bathed," I don't mean swim. In my estimation nobody, but nobody, swam in these perpetually icy rivers.

Then we arranged with the chowkidor to get us some hot water. In the meantime we lay down on our charpoys to rest.

We had only been reclining for a few minutes when I heard voices on the porch. It was good English and I knew the speaker must be a Canadian, American or Englishman. Without getting off my back, I hollered, "Where from, fella? United States, England or Canada?"

"American," he shouted back.

I got up, stood in the doorway and said, "Can you spare any rupees?"

"How many do you want?" he asked.

"We need about 200," I replied because I was thinking at the same time of the air fare back to Rawalpindi.

"I'll go check with the mem-sahib!"

He came back in a minute and said, "Yep, we can spare you 200 rupees!"

Up until this point I had made no mention of exchange or anything else.

"You're a trusting soul," I said to him, as he handed me the 200 rupees. "You may never get this back!"

He looked at me and shrugged his shoulders and said, "So what! You need it, don't you?"

"I must have a real honest face or you are a real soft touch!" I threw at him. He just smiled.

When you stop for a moment to consider, it becomes clear that actually he wasn't taking a very great risk. After all is said and done, not every person travels to Gilgit or Hunza and if a white man, a European or an American is in that part of the world, then it must

be or can be assumed that he is someone of substance. At least, he wasn't a con man or a tramp. But I could be wrong!

That is not belittling my friend's generosity and willingness to help a fellow man in distress. While it is true that 200 rupees is only worth about $40.00, still I don't think you or I or anyone else would part with $40.00 of more or less hard-earned money without knowing where it is going or if and when it's coming back.

Of course most of these acts of generosity depend upon the individual. In my life I have known people who wouldn't trust me with a 25¢ piece. On the other hand, there were some who would take my word for $25,000 without a moment's hesitation. You may believe or suspect that this is an exaggeration, but I swear it is absolutely true.

"What would you rather have," I asked him, "American bills or travelers' checks?"

"Bills, if you've got them and can spare them."

"Name's Tobe," I said to him as we shook hands. "Pal over there is Cec Brunton."

"Mine's Miller," he replied. "Have you got food and things?"

"Nope, haven't got a darn thing to eat."

"Wait till I get you something," he said and off he went, still not taking his money. He came back in a few minutes, carrying two cans.

"One of them is hamburger and the other is beans and frankfurters," he told me as he handed them to me. "All you have to do is heat them."

Then he continued, "Sorry I can't stick around, but we've got an appointment in the village and have to get away. I'll probably see you later."

In a minute he was back and said, "In case you

don't have a can opener, here's something that will open them for you. But be sure you leave it. Don't take it away with you because, if you do, we starve!"

They hadn't been gone 10 minutes, and Cec and I were back lying on the charpoys relaxing, when we heard a jeep drive up. We didn't stir. It was now dark and we had a candle burning. . . . one that we brought with us from home. In a minute or two a figure loomed in the doorway and I recognized him as the lithe, pleasant, intelligent Humayan Beg, the P.A.'s secretary who is a Hunzan.

"Hi," we greeted him. "Come on in!"

Cec got up but I remained stretched out on my charpoy.

Humayan Beg comes from a long line of illustrious Hunzakuts . . . his father, his grandfather and his great-grandfather all held high and important positions under the various Mirs of Hunza. Beg had been the secretary to the previous Political Agent here at Gilgit and he continued under the present one.

From the first moment that I came to meet the Political Agent and Humayan Beg, I found that the P.A. had great respect for Beg's capabilities, intelligence and executive ability. In my subsequent dealings with both of these gentlemen, I found that their decorum, behaviour and general conduct were on par with the best practiced in the Western world.

The P.A. knew the country in which he lived. He was a keen student of the political affairs of India and his new country, Pakistan. He was obviously a man of broad education, learning and training. Humayan Beg, on the other hand, also knew the area in which he lived but, more so, he knew Hunza and the people of Hunza. He seemed to know every phase of their history, their culture, their modes and ways of life.

I was astounded when at one time while at the P.A.'s, he asked me, "Do you live anywhere near where the Honeymoon Bridge used to be?"

"Just about 10 miles up the river from it," I replied.

"Were you there when the bridge collapsed?" he queried.

I looked at him with amazement and said, "Now you may not believe this, but I was there at the very instant the bridge collapsed and I watched as a puff of what looked like smoke arose from it as it settled on the ice. 'Tis true that crowds amounting to tens of thousands of people were gathered on both the American and Canadian shores because the collapse was expected. But from the day that the warning was sounded concerning the danger, it was more than a week before it actually collapsed. Yes, I and many thousands of others were there at the exact moment. But it's strange that you should ask about it!"

"Not so strange," he replied. "Just a few days ago I read an article about the collapse of the bridge in the Reader's Digest and when you mentioned you were from the Niagara District, naturally it brought that article to mind."

As Humayan Beg sat down in the rest house, he said, "I'm in trouble!"

"Trouble? Why, what's the matter?"

"Well, the P.A. is very much annoyed at me because I wasn't there to greet you when you arrived. He claims that his guests and friends have been neglected and that I should have been on the job to look after you."

The actual truth of the matter was that I had asked both the jeep driver and Shah Mirzah and some of the other men who were there at the time, where Humayan Beg was when they told me that the P.A.

was not there. From the various words or expressions that came back, I deduced that Humayan Beg was having his afternoon siesta and would not or could not be disturbed.

"So in order to put things right," Humayan Beg continued, "will you please come back with me to the P.A.'s residence immediately? Please come back with me, because if I don't fetch you with me right now, I'll be in serious trouble."

"Most assuredly we'll accompany you," I said and Cec agreed with a big smile. "We most certainly would not allow you to get into trouble on our account."

Believe me, we didn't need much coaxing. We were hoping and praying that this would occur. A few minutes later we were being welcomed with open arms by the genial, smiling, friendly P.A.

CHAPTER 63

A Man to be Reckoned With

AH, 'TWAS wonderful and pleasant, just like being home again. We were back in the P.A.'s guest room. How pleasant and how homey were our surroundings! You can be a million miles from home, but if someone extends to you a genuine hand of friendship, then that place is home.

It was just a matter of minutes . . . we carried our baggage and things into our quarters, gave our faces and bodies a "lick and a promise" . . . before we were ready to enjoy the warm companionship of the P.A. It was not our intention to unpack our belongings because we expected that we'd be off in the morning.

Then we went out into the garden, where we knew they would either be having tea or if tea were finished, they'd be sitting chatting and probably partaking of soft drinks. At no time while we were guests in the P.A.'s home do I recall being offered, or seeing anyone

partake of, spirited beverages. It was obvious that he was living up to the tenets of the Mohammedan faith.

"The Mir of Hunza called earlier in the day to inquire if you had arrived," he told us. "I informed him that you hadn't arrived as yet, nor had I had any word that you were close to Gilgit. I promised to telephone him and let him know how you were as soon as you reached here.

"I had some important official business to attend to upcountry and when I returned from my journey, Shah Mirzah told me at once that you had been here and that you had gone away again. He also said he couldn't understand and was completely baffled as to why you came here and then left again to go to the bungalows, when you knew this was your home."

Something within me just bubbled up and I said to the P.A., "Tell Shah Mirzah I am very grateful for those kind words. I had that feeling when I looked at him when I was here, but I couldn't talk to him and no one here spoke English enough to understand what I wanted to say or express. While I fully believed that you would have wanted us to stay here, I still couldn't be so presumptuous as to parade into your home and take possession of our quarters. But so help me, I knew that those were the thoughts in Shah Mirzah's mind. His eyes and countenance practically spoke what he felt and I could read it. Yet I was by decorum unable to take advantage of the expressions that were manifest."

"You know," I went on, "there is a limit to what a guest, a new acquaintance or even a new found friend can impose upon the bonds of his friendship. It has always been my belief that the most popular guests are those who smell of the wind and that the finest of guests and fish begin to smell after 3 days. It has been my

aim in life never to stretch the bonds of friendship and the things that friendship can endure for more than the briefest, fleeting period. I always want to leave while my host is still anxious for me to stay. Then I know that I will be welcome again."

The P.A. smiled a likeable, pleasing, fascinating smile and said, "I don't think you'll ever bore anyone."

"It is my fervent hope and prayer that I never will!"

"What are our prospects for getting out tomorrow?" I queried.

That question I threw at the P.A., because I had slight misgivings when I saw clouds scattered throughout the heavens. I recalled the rule that prevails at the airport in Pindi . . . clouds mean no flight! And while it could be possible that there were no clouds in Pindi and some here, the clouds hanging above us gave me the impression that they were widespread over quite an area.

He looked up at the sky and swung himself about without getting up, and as I looked from him to the sky and from the sky to him, I had to admire those precisely chiseled features, a face and head that were charged with character. Not often is the human physiognomy so bold and marked with the inscriptions of the great things that lie inside.

"This may mean bad news for you but I'm very much afraid there will be no plane in the morning and of course, if the planes don't come in, they're not here to go out. You know, after a time one gets so that he can recognize patterns and, what may sound even more alarming to you, is that this pattern won't change for two, three or four days. These things usually run that long. At least that's my interpretation and prediction!"

"Surely you're exaggerating," I said, half smiling,

hopefully. "You just want to worry me."

"Well," he said, "you can think what you like but I'd suggest you be prepared for a 3 or 4 day stay."

While we were thus engaged in our conversation and bantering, a jeep drove up. The P.A. arose and walked over to the driveway to greet the visitor. Then he came back with the new arrival and introduced me to him. He was Lieutenant Colonel Mir Wali Khan of the Pakistan army. He wore civilian clothes, very ordinary ones, neat and clean, but not smart or well-tailored. Evidently he was completely unused to civilian togs.

At the risk of even annoying my readers, I want to mention that the Lieutenant Colonel was a strongly built, muscular, dark, handsome man. This may even give you the impression that I think all men are handsome, or that I feel I must describe all men as being handsome. This is definitely not true. I feel that if I didn't describe these men as they were, I would be failing to give you a true picture of the individuals as I found and met them. This man looked more like an Italian and a mighty fine specimen of one, too. He had bold, flashing eyes, curly pitch-black hair and a directness that compelled you to take notice. Sure enough, he was just the kind of a man who could take that 300 or more miles from where he'd started and cross the Babusar Pass by whatever way or means were available. Many difficult mountain climbing expeditions are not nearly as tough and grim as the march he had just completed. He showed no sign of wear.

Then I listened, almost spellbound, with interest and excitement, as he related a journey from Taxila to Gilgit.

Now Taxila is about 170 miles as the crow flies

from where we were, and history relates that Alexander's armies came at least as far as Taxila and established a base there. He also went as far as the great Pir Sar and the Aornos. Too, he had made conquests further north in Bactria, Balkh—yes, even into Bokhara and Samarkand. Some historians claim to have traced his army's march even to the Wakhan, Badakshan, Chitral and right up to the Hunza River. This definitely lends credence to the claims of the people of Hunza that they are descendants of Alexander the Great, or at least some of his soldiers who married Persian girls and traveled and eventually landed and settled in the Hunza Valley, if it can be called a valley.

The Lieutenant Colonel went on to state that he had traversed the distance on horseback, jeep, yak and foot, and that in many places the road was absolutely impassable and only with the greatest of difficulty did he manage to reach Gilgit. This was alarming and serious business for the P.A., because it is of vital importance that the roads leading to villages, towns and cities in the area be maintained and kept open. From the discussions that went on I learned that officials were appointed in every village along the route and it was their most important and specific duty to see that the roads were kept open.

The conditions that we encountered along the road through Nagir and Hunza from Gilgit to Baltit obviously were the same as those that prevailed in the surrounding areas. It must have been the identical kind of natural disturbances that had affected the entire district. All of the bridges had been wiped out.

He reported to the P.A. in pointed detail the bridges that had been replaced. No, they had not been rebuilt, but temporary or makeshift crossings had been

instituted in some places. In these sections the road was passable but in other parts nothing had been done. The bridges were still out and some of the rivers he had had to ford at the risk of his life.

What a harrowing trouble-loaded journey that must have been, crossing the full breadth of the high Himalayas under the worst of conditions. That would be an adventure worth recounting. I sat like a child engrossed in a fairy tale.

He, being a soldier of the area and accustomed to various hardships, managed to traverse the entire distance without serious mishap, but with difficulty and danger. Besides, he was well-provisioned and could requisition aid and food all along the line, which he did. But how were the ordinary travelers or caravan or other wanderers to make out?

The P.A. listened attentively and his face took on a resolute, serious mien and without interruption, he signaled to one of his servants who came over promptly. He instructed him to summon Humayan Beg at once. Beg appeared within a few minutes. The P.A. dictated detailed orders and within ten minutes the wires were clicking and messages were being sent out to all important government employees in the region, as well as to other P.A.'s. There was no mistaking his directives . . . they were specific! The work was to start immediately, not tomorrow or the next day, but now!

When his secretary returned, he gave him further orders for other officials under his charge to prepare to set out as soon as possible, to see that these instructions were carried out, and to chop heads wherever there was delay, procrastination or inefficiency.

I was absolutely astounded and most seriously impressed at the conciseness, the directness and the speed of the action. What a contrast! I was totally unpre-

pared for it. You see, from the moment our plane touched land at Teheran, I had seen the pattern of play . . . procrastination, intrigue, dilly-dallying and every other way or means that a human being can devise to prevent any action from becoming a reality. (The Air Transport Office in Rawalpindi was an exception.)

Mind you, I saw an awful lot of it in Paris and in Rome, too, but hardly to the perfection it had attained in the East.

But here, right before my eyes, I saw action and movement take place that challenged the best the West could offer. And by whom? My friend, the P.A.!

CHAPTER 64

At Home at the P. A.'s

WHAT WOULD Gilgit and Hunza be like in the winter?

I know that Gilgit has a more salubrious climate than Hunza. This I gathered by the flora at first—then later, by inquiry.

Little, if anything, is said about the winters in Hunza. I deem them harsh . . . or is my imagination running riot? (There was no indication from the clothing or bedding provisions made by the people that the winters were severe or long.) They have no greatcoats or overcoats that I could see, nor was there any equipment for the clearing or handling of snow. I pondered this troublesome problem as I lay in my bed that night at the P.A.'s.

How comfortable was the guest room bed! It was genuine luxury, although there was certainly nothing wrong with the beds in the Mir's palace. Actually, in the interim, we had only spent one night out of a bed

or charpoy and that was at Chalt, where the hard stony ground of the rest house courtyard was our mattress.

I sensed the unobtrusive intrusion of the servant sliding in at about 5 o'clock with tea and biscuits. I have no idea where this custom originated but I found it rather pleasant.

You or others might have had your little "cup of tay" and a few biscuits and perhaps gone back to bed. I couldn't and neither did I desire to follow or adopt this Elysian way of life. But we certainly took full advantage of it and enjoyed the privilege of sipping a good cup of tea while propped up with hefty pillows in a comfortable bed.

Unless something was specifically planned between Cec and myself, he got up when he felt like it, and I got up when I felt like it. We were under no obligation to follow each other. By habit or necessity or a combination of both, I am an early riser . . . that is, an early riser by town or city standards. By farm standards, I would be a late riser. At 6.45 my alarm is set to ring and it doesn't make any difference what time I go to bed, I still get up at 6.45. When I was younger I could sleep 8, 10 or even 12 hours at a stretch and there was nothing in life that I enjoyed more than sleeping. But as I got older, I found that the most sleep I could endure in one stretch was 6 hours. I found 8, 9 or 10 or more hours of sleep caused me discomfort in the form of a headache or nausea. After a few bouts of this, I made it a positive rule of my existence that I would never sleep long enough to cause this nausea or headache. My head was tough enough without inflicting that upon myself, when I had the control measure at hand.

I was out walking through the P.A.'s garden before

7 o'clock and I hadn't been there more than 10 minutes when the P.A. came out to join me.

"This is a privilege I don't often enjoy," he said, "because unfortunately most of my guests are not inclined to rise so early, nor are they interested in gardens, plants, nature and gifts of Allah that surround us. Therefore I am very pleased that I have someone who shares my interest."

"That goes doubly for me," I echoed warmly. "But it's so unusual to find a man about 9,000 miles from home—a military man who is extremely busy and occupied—who understands, who knows and takes time to talk about flowers and trees."

I noticed that his interest was deep and genuine. When I spoke of propagation, of grafting or pollination, he knew what I was talking about.

"We have a greenhouse here; at least, it was one once. Come on, I'll show it to you. It is not in the best of condition, but it is not easy for me to requisition supplies for a greenhouse, especially when it requires such difficult things to procure and get here safely as glass."

"I understand clearly what you mean," I said.

While the greenhouse contained a fair amount of glass, there was much of it that was shored up and filled in with wood.

"You know you can solve the glass problem more or less easily, if you have a mind to," I suggested.

He was all eager to hear about this. "I suggest you use a plastic. It's low in cost, easy to handle and easy to ship."

"Does it solve the problem and stand up as well, and give as good results as glass?" he inquired.

"No, its period of life is definitely limited to 2 or 3 years at the most, and if it is presented with severe

winter conditions and extremely hot summers, one year is absolutely the most you can count on. Then, too, it filters out more light than glass and therefore plants don't thrive quite as well as under glass. On the other hand, they are improving it and probably will make a completely satisfactory product for greenhouse use eventually."

Our wandering and discussions were brought to an abrupt halt by the call to breakfast. Cec and the P.A.'s son, Comengi, were waiting for us. Our conversation was continued at the breakfast table, with the addition of expressions and opinions from Cec and Comengi.

Breakfast being finished, we chatted for a few minutes and then I got up and asked to be excused, not just because I had a lot to do, although I did, but I knew that the P.A.'s duties must have mounted up in the past few days—guessing from what I had heard —to monumental proportions, and he needed all the time he could get to handle them.

So I made myself as comfortable as I could on the veranda and brought out my brief case and began to write postcards by the hundreds. No, that's not an expression, but a fact. You see, before taking off I had foolishly, or perhaps cleverly, promised to send a card to any of my customer friends who wanted one and I received about 360 requests, and add to this the number of close friends and relatives to whom I wanted to send cards besides, then you have some idea of the task I had invited and had to perform.

A little while later a messenger came to tell me that I was wanted in the P.A.'s office. When I entered, the P.A. told me there was a telephone call for me. I was more than surprised and I was worried! Who could or would have been calling me here?

When I put the receiver to my ear and identified myself, a voice said, "This is Miller, the man you met yesterday. Seeing we can't get a flight out today, how about renting a jeep and taking a side trip up to one of these seldom seen towns, or maybe the P.A. will lend us one of his. We'll be glad to pay for gas and what else. I'll share expenses."

I relayed to the P.A. what Miller had said. He smiled and said, "I'll supply the jeep and a driver and direct you to a worthwhile interesting place to visit."

"O.K., Miller," I said, "we'll be picking you up in about 15 minutes."

After I hung up the receiver the P.A. went on, "This place to which I am directing you is an independent state just like Hunza and Nagir and it is ruled over by my good friend, Raja Jan Alam Khan. I don't think he'll be at his residence, which is much further up along the road and I don't think the jeep road is open that far. In fact, I am expecting a visit from the Raj tomorrow. You'll meet him then.

"I've always found Punial most interesting. I think you will like it, too. You'll find a more or less distinct change from the Hunza-Nagir type of country. Keep a close lookout and you'll find many things of interest.

"There's a town called Gulimar about 22 miles from here in Punial. The scenery, the climb and the river are extremely beautiful and most unusual. I'll give the driver instructions and provide some canned food for lunch. Enjoy yourselves and have fun!"

Now just what do you think of a guy like that? Can you have for him anything but esteem, love, gratitude or are there other words that would describe the feelings engendered by the character and kindness of this individual?

Here, reader, I'm going to ask you a bold question.

Was that your impression of the people of the East? I must somewhat abashedly admit that it was not mine. Whatever it actually was that I expected to find, I'm not exactly certain, but I'm willing to honestly admit that this type of treatment flabbergasted me. I can't claim that every man in Pakistan or India is like the P.A. or the Mir or Jahangir or Mahmud Butt but, on the other hand, many of them were among the finest human beings I have ever met anywhere.

No one will ever make me believe as long as I can draw a breath that people of this country or another country are bad people, because wherever I went, I found people who were wonderful, people who were the salt of the earth, others who were not and some of them who were probably of the worst order. But that's just the same as it is in Canada and the United States, too.

I was going to say that I found much greater generosity and kindness in Pakistan and Hunza than I found anywhere else in the world. Well, actually that's the way I feel, but then, when I question myself, I wonder if what I am saying is true. After all, I have had many kindnesses and favors bestowed upon me in my homeland. But probably I was more conscious of the kindness when it was performed so far away from home.

But no matter what, I have never known or met a finer scholar, gentleman, military figure and humanitarian than Habib-ur Rahman Khan, the P.A. at Gilgit.

CHAPTER 65

A Change of Scene -- Punial

In A Few minutes we were on our way. I was sitting with the driver and Cec was sitting in the back.

We had traveled for about 10 or 15 minutes when suddenly a most disturbing thought struck me.

"Cec," I said, "this isn't the way to the Miller's. Maybe this is another route but it certainly isn't a shortcut. We've been driving for miles."

Then Cec had a bright idea, "Did anyone tell the driver that he was supposed to go to the Miller's?"

"Egad," I said ruefully, "I didn't. I just assumed that the P.A. had told him. Darn stupid of me, I'd say." Cec looked at me and held his counsel.

It so happened that this driver could understand English fairly well.

"Where are you going?" I asked him.

"To Punial!"

"Did the P.A. say for you to pick up the Millers?"

"No!"

"Then you'd better turn around and drive us to the rest houses. Those people are there waiting for us."

I kept close watch as we headed back and I didn't feel too bad when I learned that we'd only gone about 4 or 5 miles out of our way.

The Millers were on the veranda of their rest house waiting. Melvin was a big chap, pleasant appearing, of good humor and sound intelligence and I like him best because he's got less hair than I! His wife was an attractive, demure, petite, dark girl whom Cec and I were fond of immediately. She appeared to be a natural homebody—struck us as being just like a farm girl—no pretenses, no sham or fakery. She was a good, clean, wholesome American girl.

I told Melvin about the bonehead play I had pulled and he said, "I wondered what took you so long. I expected you here 15 minutes ago."

"Well, it was just my stupidity," I said. "Forgive me, please."

Cec and I didn't realize that in taking this ride we would be covering terrain almost as bad as the worst we had encountered on the trip to Hunza. However, this time we were following the Gilgit River in the opposite direction . . . all the way to Gulapur.

Lest my readers be confused I had best explain. On the way up to Hunza you cross the bridge at Gilgit and follow the bank of the Gilgit River in a northerly direction for about 3 or 4 miles, till you reach the junction where the Hunza River flows into it. There you leave the Gilgit and continue along, following the Hunza River. To get to Punial you do not cross the bridge, but head in a northwest direction.

Lest anyone misunderstand what a jeep road is like in the sky-rocketing Karakorums, let me assure you

that it is unlike any highway you have ever seen in your life. In many places the road is just wide enough to allow passage of the wheels, and where a sharp turn has to be made, it is often necessary to back up two or 3 times before it can be negotiated.

It was a change (that is, from walking or sitting on the back of a horse) and a mighty fine drive for the first 3 or 4 miles, until we reached the outskirts of Gilgit. Then we came to a bridge that spanned a rather important nullah. It contributed a heavy flow of water to the Gilgit. It was known as Kargah Nullah and, many years ago, one of the British political agents had the area stocked with trout. The present P.A. went fishing there regularly and some of the fish for his table and which we enjoyed came from the Kargah Nullah.

The Kargah Nullah is fed from a glacier that lies on the flank of the Diora Mountain, a towering peak over 20,000 feet high. It is from this free-flowing, permanent supply of glacial water that the Sardar Kuhl or Gilgit Aqueduct is maintained. The Sardar Kuhl distributes ample water for the entire Gilgit area.

We all had a feeling of false security. This road was just a nice casual drive through the hills around Gilgit. We were all smiling and chatting and having lots of fun. The Millers hadn't been to Hunza and we were filling them with stories of the terrible dangerous roads, and what a nice pleasant jitney ride this was turning out to be. But before too long I found out how wrong we could be.

Along this route there were no villages or terraced fields perched at various levels high up or half way down the mountainsides, as they were in Hunza. The cultivation practically all took place in the fertile valleys at locations that were down closer to the level

of the river. Here, among these mountains, the slopes were more undulating. Mind you, they were high, but I got the impression that the hills were more spread out, thus accounting for the fertile valleys that abounded in this district. The mountain stretches were scenic and spectacular, but you could tell you were in an entirely different area from the Hunza-Nagir terrain.

I noticed pomegranate trees growing wherever the terrain permitted. Obviously they are indigenous to this area. Unluckily for me, the fruits were not ripe enough to eat. I love pomegranates!

We passed what appeared to be holes or breaches in the mountains. I asked the jeep driver to stop on one or two occasions and I investigated these things that looked like holes or doorways. These doorways were always 20 feet or more up from the road level and the drop from the threshold was sheer in every case. Miller was also keenly interested in this and we found that they were actually homes built right in the mountain. Mind you, we only came across three or four of them, and in every case the drop from the doorway to the roadway was sheer. They must carry a ladder of some kind with them in order to get into these cavernous, mountainside houses! Or, when somebody is in the home, maybe he drops a ladder down to let others up.

We examined these quite carefully, although we never got a peek inside. We suspected that perhaps these were small caves or naturally occurring enlarged cracks or crevices. Now, they might have been excavations but what a task that would be, especially with the primitive tools and equipment at their command. They had their advantages . . . no leaky roofs, no vermin, no marauders, no wear and tear or maintenance and, best of all, no unwelcome or unexpected

callers. You could just pretend no one was home and they couldn't peek in to see!

I was quite impressed by the magnitude of the Gilgit River and the tremendous flow of its water. As a matter of fact, the three of us, on a few occasions, pointed out what we believed would make ideal damsites for hydroelectric power. Of course none of us was qualified to speak in a technical sense, but it certainly appeared as though the cost of erecting a hydroelectric plant in these areas would be very low because of the natural, suitable facilities offered.

I'm fully aware of the fact that equipment and materials would have to be brought in. Yet, the promises of reward were so great and so long lasting that it would unquestionably be worthwhile. Then, too, sand and gravel are vitally important and required in enormous quantities in erecting dams and power plants. These would be available on the spot.

An important factor would be the amount of flow of water during the entire 12 month period, and how big the dams or flooded areas would have to be to store up sufficient water to maintain the continued generation of power. I believe that low-priced electricity could add greatly to the well-being and living standards of the people in the rural areas of Pakistan.

I gathered that we were getting close to Gulapur. Now we came down from the lofty trail on the mountain and reached a location where the road no longer existed. It seemed, by now, we should have been getting quite accustomed to traversing roads that do not exist . . . only, in this case, it was not a road through the mountains because it was a vast, flat, stony area.

This broad region resembled a semidried-up river bed. And it *was* a river bed at unspecified, undetermined times. But it was miles wide at this point. A

bridge over it was unthinkable. There must have been another route or road around it when it was in spate. Most certainly, it was not anywhere within sight and you could see for a good many miles about you.

I could see the mountains on my right. They were mere foothills—just a few thousand feet high. Beyond these were the snow-capped peaks and the glacier from whose receding bulk came the gush of water that was channeled through gorges, defiles, clefts and other openings. A few miles back it broke into the open, away from the confining mountain sides and walls, and spewed itself over this entire flat region. That is why I said, "this broad area." I don't know how many square miles was actually the river bed. This was the confluence of the melting glaciers.

Today you could walk across and, if you were careful and could hop from rock to rock, you might even avoid getting your feet wet. Tomorrow or the day after, depending upon whether the sun was obscured by the clouds or the day was clear, neither man nor beast could hope to cross. Even boulders weighing tons would be tossed about like marbles with the force of the irresistible flow. That is part of the enchantment, mystery, awesomeness of this impregnable mountain area.

It appeared this stream had been in spate a few days ago and had washed away the road and it had not yet been repaired. At this point we did not see any sign of the road or what had been the road. Our driver followed markers which indicated where it was safe to travel and these appeared about every 50 feet. A marker was a stone turned up on its end. We crept along quite cautiously, the wheels almost continually up to the hub-caps in water.

While crossing this expanse of gravel, stones, rocks

and boulders—true moraine—we were quite entranced to see a train of animals. They were chiefly donkeys, but there were a few camels. They were laden for fair, carrying every pound that they could bear. Inquiries brought the information that this was a caravan from Kashmir. This was the old trail and the shortest route between the Pamirs and Srinagar.

There hadn't been too many caravans coming through this area, because this is getting quite close to the cease-fire zone, that is being watched over by the United Nations and marks the area that is disputed by India and Pakistan. The political implications involved here are, in my opinion, very complicated. I, on many occasions, listened to arguments and viewpoints expressed by followers and adherents of both causes. But to one who lives in Canada, where there are two distinct religions living side by side in peace and harmony, and have been since the country was taken away from the Indians, I could not understand why India would not grant the people of Pakistan the right to follow and worship the religion of their own dictates. I do know that the partition caused great suffering and hardship to millions of people who are now Pakistanis.

I make no pretense at judging right, wrong or guilt on the part of anyone. After all, I had but a short sojourn in those countries and I would not wish to try to pose as one who understands the situation.

We all agreed that this jeep ride along the narrow winding mountain paths and then down to nullah and river bed levels was indeed a rare treat. While I loved the scenery, I sure did worry whether or not we'd ever get down safely from those ledges. What I really worried about was that we might come down too fast—in a heap with our jeep!

We passed many road crews clearing and repairing the road. On at least 3 occasions we had to wait while they rolled boulders and rocks off the road to make it possible for us to pass. There were other occasions when we had to stop and get out and move boulders ourselves, where there were no road crews to do it for us. Some were so big it took all four men to roll them off the road. I'm glad they didn't come down while we were passing!

I haven't been subsidized by the makers of the jeep, but I doubt if any other conveyance in existence, driven by a motor, could traverse that terrain. I salute that utilitarian contraption!

At last we reached Gulapur and we found that it afforded the usual rest house facilities. We stopped and had our lunch with the things the P.A. had provided, plus a little bit that the Millers thoughtfully brought along. All we needed from the chowkidor was hot water which was provided in satisfactory quantities.

I might mention that hot water in this entire area isn't provided by a mere snap of the fingers. Here it takes wood to make heat and fire wood is a mighty scarce commodity. Here and there along the trail we would meet a pack animal carrying a load of twigs, branches and sometimes hardwood. Also, on many occasions we met men who were carrying bundles or pieces of wood on their back. Not a splinter is ever wasted.

On one occasion, on the Hunza trail, I came across an old man (he looked well over 70 to me) carrying three chunks of wood tied on his back like a haversack. Maybe he had been visiting or traveling for any one of many reasons. At times he passed us and then again we caught up with him and went by him.

I examined his load. He had 3 ordinary chunks of

Chenar wood that had obviously been split from a 20″ length of limb, about 12″ in diameter. The load would weigh about 25 or 30 lbs. His home was in Aliabad and he had carried those three 20-inch chunks of wood 60 miles. So you see wood and fuel are important commodities in this part of the world!

You can understand why, when at any of the rest houses you asked for hot water, it had to be paid for because it took wood, precious wood, to produce the heat. The kettles are invariably small. They don't heat any more than is absolutely necessary. As for themselves, I'd wager they use very little boiling water.

The village and the people in Gulapur were just like any of the villages we had come across on the road to Hunza, but this settlement was smaller, having only a few houses.

The village of Gulapur itself was inconsequential. I doubt if even 100 people live there. There appeared to be a mill and a type of shop, but that was all.

While waiting for Mrs. Miller to prepare the lunch which she offered to do, I strayed away for a quick look-see. I wandered through a bit of woods or perhaps I should say, thicket. It was comforting because very little of this type of thing does one see in this part of the world. There were some good sized trees, many shrubs and wild flowers and it was located but a few feet from the river's edge.

The rest house was probably 100 yards away on an elevation. I had been walking gradually downwards without noticing it too much, because the slant was gradual and I'd been enjoying the so called tramp through the woods.

Then I heard someone calling me and I heard Miller's prize-winning hog-caller's voice shout a phrase that he knew would bring me arunning, "Soup's on!"

CHAPTER 66

Oh, What a Wonderful Day!

BECAUSE OF the P.A.'s thoughtfulness and Mrs. Miller's culinary ability, we had a most satisfactory lunch. As road conditions ahead did not allow us to go further and there was very little to be seen in this tiny village, we decided we'd go back as soon as we could find our driver.

The Millers had managed to pick up a few words of Urdu during their stay in Peshawar and they told the chowkidor to summon the driver. It wasn't as easy as we had anticipated. But he couldn't be very far away. There were but few houses close by and he must be in one of them. By the time we got our things gathered together, he reappeared and then we learned that he had been visiting his sister who lived in the village and at the same time he had had lunch with her.

As we drove down the narrow yet traversable roadway I saw the same scenes that had been repeated

throughout this area. Children, usually girls, were tending the animals in the fields. They would shepherd them to every hill, nook, cranny or vale that had a bit of grass growing or green showing and the animals, be they sheep or cows, would be allowed to nibble at the growth. The girls who usually looked after this chore ranged in age from about 7 to 15. But one could be easily mistaken concerning ages.

We instructed the driver to take it easy and drive slowly. No, this was not necessarily a security measure, but both Miller and I were interested in the crops that were growing in the fields and we both desired to stop occasionally to investigate the kinds of grains and foragings, the yield, the soil in which it was growing and even talk to the farmers if we could get hold of them.

Miller was an employee of the United States government and his duties took him from farm to farm wherever his aid was solicited. He would advise the farmers concerning improved methods of agriculture and help them select crops that were suited to their land. He was a man of wide experience, for he had been an agriculture representative in the United States before being recommended for this assignment.

From his experience with the farmers of Pakistan he had found them a willing, amenable group of people and he enjoyed helping and working with them. I understood that in his work he supplied the seed free of charge for newly selected crops, which he recommended to the farmers.

In the distance we saw a fairly large field of golden wheat, slightly swaying in the summer breeze and we instructed our driver to stop and let us out. We climbed over a fence built of rocks which were not cemented together and we wandered about the enclosure. It was quite patchy. The grain was firm and hard and the

stalks carried a fine load.

The fields here were much larger than in Hunza, for the shores of the Gilgit River at this point broadened into a gently rolling valley and extended at least a mile back into the foothills. Valleys similar to this were typical in this area. Invariably, right flush where the terrain blended into the mountain there would be a thicket of pomegranate shrubs growing.

We continued this exploring practice most of the way back to Gilgit and the standing, swaying fields of grain were always wheat. It was clear that chapatties made out of whole wheat flour was the staple of the area, if not the whole country.

We were now getting close to Gilgit and Miller announced, "I'm going to stop off at the Kargah Nullah and do a little trout fishing!"

"You're what?" I said, surprised.

"I'm going to stop off down the road here a mile or so and do some fishing."

"With what?" I questioned.

Reaching under him he pulled out a couple of rolls which obviously contained tackle and the paraphernalia he'd require.

"I wondered what that stuff was doing lying there," I said to him. "I had no idea you had such a venture in mind."

"Oh, I've been fishing here a couple of times before."

"Did you catch anything?"

"Oh, I always managed to get something, even if only a few fingerlings. If they're too small, I throw them back."

Now we reached the bridge crossing the nullah and the driver pulled up at Miller's say-so. I looked up and down the creek and said, "Can't do much fishing here . . . it's too rocky and swift!"

Pointing into the distance, Miller said, "I'll climb part way up that mountain and there the land flattens out a bit and the river is smoother and broader."

"Do we have to sit here and wait for you?" I asked.

He was already starting up the mountain along the nullah, gear in arm.

Mrs. Miller broke in, "No, we'll go on. He'll find his way back to the bungalow about dark. He doesn't mind, in fact, he enjoys the walk back from here."

"But it's well over 5 miles back to the bungalow!"

"That's just about right," Mrs. Miller replied.

We had the jeep leave Mrs. Miller off at the bungalow and she said, "We'll be seeing you tonight. The P.A.'s having a party and he invited us."

"Do you think your man will be back in time?"

"If he isn't, I'll go alone," she said. "But if I know my man, he'll be back in time all right."

With that we had the driver take us back to our quarters at the P.A.'s.

After washing up and making ourselves respectable, we were served tea in our room. Then we lay down on the beds and had a rest.

I was strolling around the garden when the guests began to arrive. The precinct was aglow with brilliant white light given off by the many gasoline lanterns. While the residence was amply provided with electricity and outlets, there obviously was no provision made for outdoor parties. That is why the lights on occasions like this were supplied by lanterns.

I can hardly explain the exact kind of party this was. The men and women enjoyed themselves in two different locations and in distinctly separate groups. When a man arrived with his wife, she was escorted into the house and the man then came into the garden. So the women were enjoying their party indoors with

the P.A.'s wife as their hostess and the men were having their party outside with the P.A. as their host.

I've racked my brains on many occasions trying to recall all of the guests who were present that evening. Altogether there were about twenty. There was the P.A., his son, Friend Cec Brunton, Melvin Miller, a young doctor who was the dentist of the area, Jahangir, Beg, who was the school principal, Humayan Beg, who was the P.A.'s secretary and a few high ranking army officers. These are all that I can recall by name or profession.

The dinner was a do-it-yourself affair . . . that is, buffet style. There were cold cuts of meat, salads (both fruit and vegetable), rice, potatoes, condiments, sauces and ice cream, and also hot dishes, including chicken, mutton, beef. I understand both the Mir and the P.A. have ice cream on various occasions, but they have to have ice brought down from one of the glaciers. Bowls of fresh fruits were conspicuous and you had your choice of coffee or tea. Considering that this was more or less an outpost of civilization, the dinner must be looked upon as an achievement of one form or another.

I recall that there were 3 or 4 groups of discussion taking place at one and the same time. I believe that in our group there was Cec, the dentist, Jahangir and the P.A. and the discussion waxed into sort of an argument. The young dentist was feeling his oats . . . that is, he was feeling the importance of his country's decision in becoming a republic, although still a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

"Why don't you in Canada also form a republic and break away from Great Britain?"

"But Canada is completely independent," I replied.

"Utter nonsense," he said. "Canada is under the thumb of Great Britain who sends a governor general

there to administer the affairs of your country."

At this stage Cec calmly assured him that Canada was not under the thumb of Great Britain nor did Great Britain select the governor generals. The Canadian government designates a man for the post and the reigning monarch makes the official appointment. Nor does Canada pay tribute in any manner, shape or form to the mother country.

But the young Pakistani dentist was not to be outdone. He insisted that Canada was a vassal of Great Britain and the only course for her to follow was that taken by Pakistan and become a republic.

From my earlier discussions with the young dentist, I knew that he had had a good education. In fact, he had been educated a great deal in England. It occurred to me that if he had this misconception concerning the status and government of Canada, what must millions of other people who do not have his background of learning think? So I'd like to make it clear that Canada does not pay tribute to England in money or goods of any kind, that the King or Queen or the Parliament of Great Britain holds neither rule nor control of any segment of the Canadian government, that the Governor General of Canada is appointed by the monarch but only at the behest of the Canadian Parliament, that Canada is not forced to fight with or on the side of Britain nor can Britain declare war for Canada. On the other hand, Canada's ties with Britain are strong, binding ties, the ties of friendship, of kinship, the ties of love and affection. The population of Canada, even at the present time, still shows about 55 per cent to 60 per cent British stock. Therefore it is natural to expect that we look upon Britain as the mother country.

While this discussion was reaching its height, I noticed that the P.A. was somewhat concerned. He was

a little worried, lest the dentist, by his exuberance and enthusiasm, get a bit out of hand and probably offend some of his visitors—namely, us. Actually there was little or no danger of that on my part or on the part of Cec. I can go through the hottest discussion or argument, even to the extent of finger pointing and fist waving, without becoming the least bit belligerent or pugnacious. But the P.A. couldn't know this. So he urged the dentist to be reasonable and believe what people from another country told him, "Because," he said, "they should know the customs and laws of their own country just as you know the customs and laws of yours."

This sensible and logical statement on the part of the P.A. tended to soothe the ebullient dentist.

It was a grand evening. We listened to words of wisdom. We gave vent to our thoughts and expressions. We enjoyed the proximity of mighty fine, intelligent men and at the same time we appeased the pangs of hunger and thirst. What more can a man desire? I would call it a perfect evening.

CHAPTER 67

Another Shangri-la?

'TWAS A day and a night of adventure and travel, of gaiety and laughter. Here East met West. None were harmed . . . in truth, all were charmed.

The guests were departing—quickly, it seemed.

Strange to relate, in the East, even in the larger centers, there is little or no activity after 10 o'clock in the evening. It was now about 10:30 and the last of the guests had bid and been bid fond "adieu." Cec had gone to bed and I was wandering around the garden enjoying the moonlight, for I'd walked beyond the light of the hanging lanterns. The servants were busily engaged in clearing the tables.

The P.A. spied me and called, "That's a good idea you've got there . . . having a little stroll before retiring, after a hectic night."

"Come on and join me," I called. "But maybe you'd best sit and relax. You've had a long, hard, tiring day."

"No, I think I'd very much enjoy a little walk around the garden with you, to release the pent up tensions."

"What do you think?" I asked the P.A. "Is it good or bad to be a dreamer?"

"Dreamers are lucky," he said. "They are a world unto themselves!"

"Every man has his share of grief and woe . . . and so it must be! Were it not for my dreams, I'm afraid I'd have given up the struggle long ago. And you know what? Dreams are the only possessions that a man has that no one can rob him of. You can deprive a man of his freedom, of his wealth, of his food and clothing, but you can't deprive a man of his dreams. They, along with his soul, are beyond the reach of all and everyone, save himself. And as long as he has those, he has something to live for."

Then in a slow, calm voice that sounded almost like a soliloquy, the P.A. said, "So you, too, are a dreamer. Then this little tale that I've been waiting and hoping to relate to someone—a kindred soul—for a long time was meant for you. And this tale is not for every or any dreamer. It must be a dreamer who has lived with, loved and become attuned to nature."

"You know," he said to me, "some day I'd like to show you a preview of paradise, so that you might know what to expect when the real thing comes your way. The reason I'd like to take you there is because I have perceived your love of nature, of plant life and all things that live, grow, tingle and vibrate with life and living."

I expressed my gratitude to him for these kind words and he countered, "But only a related heart and soul could recognize those qualifications and traits in another human being. Therefore we are of a similar breed and ilk."

He smiled in the most unusual but charming manner, which was entirely his own.

Then he went on, "When I was P.A. at Skardu just a short few years ago, I discovered an amazing spectacle, one from whose sorcery I have never completely recovered.

"You already understand something about my activities and realize that in my work part of my duty is to visit every part of the district. Every village, hamlet or settlement must be called on and inspected, because I am required to give detailed reports concerning these settlements to the central government.

"Now, through the years, I have learned where the best trout fishing is. I know where ibex can be found, and the famed ovis poli, and leopards, yes, and bears and ducks and other game fowl."

Here I interrupted, "Have you ever seen signs of the Yetti or the abominable snowman?"

His eyes met mine and I felt the glow pierce beyond my eyeballs, right into my cranium and grey matter. He was reading and understanding my mind, as well as I knew it myself.

"Perhaps," he continued, "I know where the abominable snowman dwells, and when I have finished my story, you may realize why he has never been seen or found and only rarely have his imprints in the snow been located.

"Through the years I have traveled much through the mountains and passes of the Hindu Kush, the Karakorums and the Himalayas. I believe I have traversed more and higher mountain territory than any living man—on foot, by donkey, on horse or yak and jeep. Yes, I have, I am sure, broken paths and trails where no man has ever trod before me.

"You have seen some of the magnificent beauty of

these Karakorums. Well, multiply that a hundred times and you might have some idea of what I have been privileged to witness . . . truly more than enough grandeur and loveliness to overpower a man's senses.

"Yes, I have known valleys that would please and thrill even those who fear and do not like mountains because, once you have found sanctuary in some of these valleys, the mountains are practically obscured.

"But what I want to tell you about is the hidden valley that I have discovered. I believe that I am the only man who knows of its existence. I happened to find it one day when I was strictly alone, having left my porters and aides at camp a few miles away.

"I had been in this vicinity on a few occasions but I had never noticed or found this valley before and for a very logical reason: because the entrance to it is only open a few weeks of the year, and some years not at all."

Now here I interrupt the P.A.'s story to talk to my readers . . .

Before you jump to the conclusion that this tale is fantastic and untrue or fictitious, I want to remind you that as you drive through Tioga Pass into Yosemite National Park, you will find there, as I did in the middle of July, that the road takes you through a more or less narrow opening on both sides of which there are mountains of ice. That is, the roadway is cut through a wall of ice. If it were not for manmade machinery and equipment, that ice wall would probably not be breached through the entire summer, at least in the years when the winters are long and the summers are short.

Tioga Pass, as you know, is in the state of California, on the high western slope of the Sierra Nevadas, so you don't have to go very far to prove or disprove

my statement. I am bringing this to your attention so that you will not assume that the story as it was told to me was a complete fabrication.

To go on with the P.A.'s story:

"We were on our way from Astor to Skardu and we had to cross over the Deosai Mountains, which are not especially known for their great heights or ruggedness, but more for their beauty. (The tallest summit in the Deosai range is less than 19,000 feet.) Yet this beauty is interlaced with danger. Explorers and mountain climbers seem to give this area a wide berth. The mountains here are so interwoven and interlaced and the slopes are draped so heavily with glimmering glaciers that it allows for few, if any, valleys and this means no settlements. The entire area is practically void of human habitation.

"I was in a meditative mood. I was troubled. It was the time of the partition between India and Pakistan. I took my responsibilities seriously. Grim realities and the impending dangers to so many people were burdening my soul.

"I allowed my horse to carry me. She was a fine mare and I was very fond of her. I did not guide her . . . She ambled on as she saw fit. I paid little or no attention to where she was straying, but when she stopped to graze, I awoke from my meditations and looked about me. The grass was quite green here, where the horse had halted, and for good reason: just a short distance away a fast flowing nullah was skipping along.

"I resolved to follow it to its inception—just as a whim—because the surroundings seemed so attractive. I urged my mount forward.

"Soon we were climbing over rocks and boulders. But my mare was sure-footed and I allowed her to seek her own pace. Now the path of the creek became

steeper and narrower. My horse slowed as though she were feeling her way but still went on without my urging.

"There was a sharp turn and then I faced a high bank on my left that completely obscured the path from whence I came . . . on the right there was practically a sheer mountain wall. But in the wall was a gap not more than 5 feet wide, through which a stream was chuckling . . . the source of the water that I had been following. I abruptly realized that this part of the mountain was a massive solid wall of ice.

"I looked up and through the opening, and the scene before me was startling! For a moment I felt it was unreal. It was incredible! I couldn't believe it! I urged and guided my horse upstream and, when we passed the gateway, I turned her out of the watercourse and stopped.

"I could hardly credit what I saw. I was facing a valley and for miles ahead of me, for miles to the right and to the left, my eyes followed an undulating, soothing, peaceful contour. The area was completely covered with flowers of various hues and shades. The lower reaches of the ascending slopes were as green as a meadow and further up, they were tree covered. The fragrance, the beauty and the magnificence of the scene almost bewildered me. I held my breath, my mount remained motionless and I looked around, slowly surveying the kaleidoscopic panorama in the emerald setting.

"I estimated from my maps that this valley was at about 12,000 feet, but wholly surrounded on all sides by peaks from 15,000 to 19,000 feet.

"I have ever been a wooer of natural beauty, but on this occasion I was awed—mesmerized—thunderstruck! I don't know how long I remained entranced, but

eventually I got off my mount and walked about to examine the flowers and herbage in a little more detail.

"There were no trails or paths—not a sign of human encroachment. Small rivulets streaked by swiftly from their start in the distant slopes. Here and there a copse stood out by a pool and brightly plumaged, platinum-thoraxed birds swayed and swung on the resilient branches.

"I mounted my horse again and rode on, urging her to a hill a few hundred yards away. It was only a gentle rise on the valley floor but 'twas the loftiest point about. Surveying the scene from this elevation, I could see mirror-like flashes which I knew to be ponds or lakes scattered about like gems.

"A most surprising and pleasing thing to my eye were the many groups of varying species of fine erect trees that bedecked the landscape. They seemed to favor the small estuaries, ponds and lake quarters.

"Our Karakorums, unlike the mountains in Europe and America, are treeless and usually bare of grass. They are well named, from the Turkish, meaning black rock. That is why the sight of the copses, thickly green-carpeted, delighted my eyes and senses.

"As I drew near and passed many ponds, I saw fish jumping and scurrying about in the water. I am an angler and this sight was most welcome.

"I must have been there a long time, lost in a reverie of ecstasy. Suddenly I woke up to the realization that the sun had moved somewhat and I'd best find my way back to base camp or my men would fear I had been injured or lost."

* * * *

Here my idealist friend and narrator halted. I glanced at him. His head was erect, his eyes scanned and pierced the darkness. Then he continued slowly

in a hollow voice, like an echo chiming in my ears, "I have been back to that section twice, but not in the month of July. On both occasions I found no nullah flowing down through the river bed or rocks and boulders. But I know the path thoroughly. It is engraved on my mind. Only in July am I sure to find that nullah in spate.

"No, my story isn't a figment of my imagination! It isn't a fantasy. What I have told you is the absolute truth. However, I really expect no one to believe me.

"I know that the gateway will be open in July. In a hot, long summer the gateway will be wider. In a cool, short summer it will be narrow. Perhaps there will be only room for a man to crawl through and even that, under water. But someday I'm going back there again. I will go in early July and will wait, if necessary, until that nullah begins to flow. I would like to take you with me. Who knows? If that nullah fails, we may have to scale that bulwark of ice. We will go equipped with glacier-climbing equipment. We will make it. We will, if necessary, scale the highest glacier and find our way to that hidden valley of paradise!"

I remained silent for some minutes after his story. So did he. Then I said, "You know, I'm just fool enough to believe you and go with you. So within the course of the next two or three years, especially if I hear or know of predictions for a hot summer in this area, you can count on me appearing on your doorstep with a pair of extra shoes and a toothbrush slung over my shoulder and an open mind and a glassy, faraway look in my eyes . . . and I'll expect you to supply the rest of the equipment necessary to make the joyous pilgrimage. And I'll tell you what else! I'll bet my life we'll find it, too, even if we never get back and it costs us our lives!"

CHAPTER 68

Hell Hath No Fury

ABOUT 5 O'CLOCK one evening while we were sitting out in the garden under the trees at the P.A.'s residence, a jeep drove up. It came to a stop and a young man hopped out and came towards the P.A. They exchanged greetings. Then the P.A. brought the lad over to me and introduced him as Inayatullah Khan.

"This young man is the Pakistan government's horticultural representative in this territory," he said. "You will recall I mentioned to you that we have a small government nursery in Gilgit. Mr. Kahn is in charge of it. I invited him here this evening so you and he could have a chat and perhaps learn something from each other."

I soon found out that the most important kinds of trees for that entire area were walnuts, mulberries and almonds. Yes, they grew other fruits, too, but these were most valued.

Every time I asked a question I got an answer, but I also got another question thrown at me by either the horticultural representative or the P.A. The P.A. sat by during our entire discussion—observing and asking pointed questions. This man amazed me more and more every day I knew him. Every item that concerned his country was of interest to him and he realized the great accent that was needed in agriculture and he listened attentively to everything that was said.

After we had discussed the matter for a few minutes, I remarked that I would very much like to see the government nursery if it were at all possible. The P.A. thought this was a splendid idea and immediately summoned one of his servants and told him to arrange for a jeep to be prepared as quickly as possible. We continued our discussion until a jeep with a nattily attired military driver pulled up. We got in and off we went.

Every time the P.A. drove through the gateway of his home the guard at the gate, as well as a quartet of soldiers who were always stationed at a neatly arranged house, which must have been a military office, sprang to attention and brought their rifles to the "present arms" position. I had watched this display on a few occasions and this time the P.A. turned to me and said, "I've tried to arrange for the dispensation of that saluting every time I go in and out. I sometimes have to pass back and forth more than a dozen times a day and it seems utterly ridiculous to have the men spring to attention and salute every time this happens. But so far I haven't managed to arrange anything, even a compromise that will logically eliminate it. It bothers me somewhat."

On down, through the streets of Gilgit, clattered the jeep. Gilgit roads are not bad—in fact, for that part of the world I would say they were very good.

Bear in mind that here, too, the terrain is very rocky and mountainous and they just do not have the kind of road-building equipment that we have in America.

The roads were mainly single-traffic roads and if you came to a turn, you made sure you tooted your horn loud and long to prevent a crackup, because in Gilgit there were many jeeps. Most of them belonged to the military, but there were a few privately owned ones.

Most of the flat land in the area was used for military training fields, the air field and polo fields. It was not nearly as rough or precipitous an area as Hunza, but there were still no great acreages of level land. Gilgit encompassed probably the largest area of level ground found for hundreds of miles about.

Soon the jeep was off the sort of main thoroughfare and began to weave, wobble and turn. It became apparent that the road leading to the nursery was not a much traversed highway.

When the jeep eventually pulled up, it was at the dead end of something or other. To have gone two feet further would have meant falling over what looked to be a cliff.

We got out. The agricultural representative led the way and we had to actually scramble with both hands and feet to make the descent. At this particular point, while the descent was almost perpendicular, it was only 8 or 10 feet down and there was the nursery, a sunken area of about an acre!

It was just like a bowl with a spread of level land in the center, and here in rows were growing trees of various kinds, from small seedlings to large trees up to 3 and 4 years old.

The soil seemed to be quite good—of a sandy loam nature and reddish-brown in color. I judged it to be

good soil because of the tremendous number of weeds that were growing everywhere, including right in the rows with the nursery stock.

My thoughts floated back home and I thought how gratified my staff would be to see this nursery. Then they could proudly say, "Well, here at last is a nursery that has more weeds than we have."

We moved about from row to row. I had little difficulty identifying the mulberries, the walnuts and the almonds, all of which are indigenous and do exceptionally well in that area. Yes, they were growing different kinds of apricots, some sweet cherries and a few plum, apple and pear trees as well.

I asked Mr. Khan if he grew any citrus. He then said that there used to be quite a few orange and lemon trees in the areas, but a frost some 15 or so years back had killed all the citrus except a few of the lemon and the lime, which are somewhat hardier.

The reason I brought up the matter of the citrus was because I had noticed here and there in the area some lemon trees. They were of fairly good size and they seemed to be growing as luxuriantly and as healthily as they ever did in California. I did not know that lemons were hardier than orange or grapefruit. At various locations I'd also noticed lime trees growing and they were doing exceptionally well.

"Have you tried oranges since that freeze-up that you mentioned?" I asked of them.

Both admitted that they hadn't.

"That's a genuine pity," I remarked. "You should have tried again and also some of the newer and hardier varieties. They might do splendidly and then you would have a very valuable addition to your varieties of fruit.

"Unfortunately, we can't grow citrus in Niagara.

Otherwise I would send you some seedlings. In fact, if you have difficulty getting any seedlings of oranges, I'll have some sent to me from California or Florida and forward them on to you. That would not be the best method, though. It would be better if they were forwarded directly."

"I am trying to have the government extend the area of the nursery and give us more help and greater financial assistance. So far I haven't met with success but I am going to keep after them," the P.A. informed me.

"I wish it were possible," I said to Mr. Khan, "to say this is a wonderful nursery, but really it isn't. How many men do you have helping you?"

"Eight permanent men," he answered. "But there are four other nursery farms besides this one and many other duties we have to perform. The nursery here is only incidental."

I didn't say so but I thought to myself that one man alone in his spare time could have made a much better job of this nursery than they did. However, perhaps I was judging by work standards as performed in American nurseries. Any good man with a bit of good equipment should without a doubt be able to look after 4, 5 or more acres all by himself. But remember, I am talking about American standards and considering American equipment and that may make all the difference in the world.

So I'd seen a nursery and really wasn't impressed! We discussed the various budding and grafting techniques, the types of rootstock, the problems and difficulties.

He then went on to tell me that as long as they would give trees away free, they would be used. But if the farmers had to get new varieties by means of purchase

or trade or make changes on their own volition, very little would be done by the average grower in the area.

It was not hard for me to understand that. In the first place, if you had a tree or an orchard that was producing and would continue to produce for many more years, even if the fruit was undersized, unsaleable or unbarterable, you would be reluctant to cut down and remove that tree or orchard because it was still producing a crop of food and a fairly good revenue.

Sure, I could see the ultimate reward, because I have actually made the change and found that it was good. But here was a poor farmer with very little laid away and you are asking him to cut down his existing, producing trees, which requires a lot of labor, and then buy and plant new trees and face an unproductive period that would last from 3 to 5 years until the new trees began to bear. And remember, they only had the word or promise of the agricultural expert that the tree would bear an improved or better variety that perhaps was also heavier yielding. You can't blame them for believing that a bird in the hand is worth many in the bush!

Progress is comparatively easy when you're traveling aboard a bulldozer or even a fast moving train. But when you're depending on a donkey and he has to be prodded every inch and then guided lest he step back a few feet or go sideways and wander . . . well, then it is understandable why progress is somewhat slower in the East.

We climbed back up the way we came and our soldier driver was waiting. We clambered back into the jeep and away we went, back to the P.A.'s residence.

It was dark twilight when we hopped out of the jeep. There under the trees chatting amicably were Cec, Jahangir and a woman. It was too dark for me

to see her face, although I could appraise her features.

The P.A. casually greeted the lady who remained seated (sprawled might be a better word) in her chair. Then he sat down next to her and I found a chair on the opposite end of the diameter of the circle and sat down, too.

I listened as the woman did most of the talking. Her English was good but I imagine English was not her native tongue. Further, I was quite sure that she was a continental European.

After listening to her speak in a more or less argumentative manner, with the P.A. chiefly, but occasionally to Jahangir and Cec, I had the impression that she was most definitely a strong willed woman. From the conversation, I picked up the information that she was a professor at the Peshawar University, teaching French, although she herself was a Belgian. She was at the present time in the Gilgit area to arrange for permission to do mountain climbing around Hunza.

I'd like to make this statement at this time. I was not told any of this story by anyone. I gathered this from listening to what was going on. I took no part whatsoever in the conversation but sat back content to hear and learn.

She was bugging the P.A. for a permit to go to Hunza and he politely told her that he was not in a position to grant her a permit to go into Hunza, but that there were plenty of hills, mountains, glaciers and any other type of mountain terrain that she might want to climb or scale right in the Gilgit area. But she persisted and wanted to go to Hunza and didn't see why she couldn't. She obviously had been in the area at one time or another, although I had not noticed her name in the Mir's guest book.

It was clear to me that the P.A. was not happy about

this woman being there and bothering him, and he intimated to her that he was also not happy about her going out on these mountain and glacier exploring expeditions by herself, with only a couple of guides. He admitted that there was nothing illegal or wrong about it, but he just couldn't reconcile himself to seeing a woman going out alone—and with scant provisions, too—on what he believed rightfully to be dangerous undertakings in a dangerous territory.

Further, it was clear to me that the P.A. was genuinely annoyed and he made no bones about showing his displeasure and vexation. But he was still a gentleman. He was still kind and yes, courteous, too.

She, on the other hand, spoke her mind quite plainly and couldn't see why the P.A. was so distrustful or unaccommodating to a woman. It was obvious that she felt that women, or at least she, could do anything any man could do and in most cases do it as well or better! Dang her hide, somehow or other, while listening to her, I had the impression that she could, too!

As the conversation or argument continued, I could feel, as sure as shooting, that she had had a world of experience in doing exactly this thing. She knew even this district quite well and had been on sorties in a wide part of the Karakorums. And no doubt, she knew the region better than anyone else except the natives.

Said I to myself, "This is a woman to reckon with!"

This haranguing continued for more than an hour. I'm sure that was the longest period in my life that I ever remained mute. I wanted to break into the conversation at various points. In fact, I had one devil of a time restraining myself. Many things she said irked me and almost caused my tongue to catapult out of my mouth. But out of respect to my host, I remained silent.

Eventually she took her leave. It was night and she walked out of the garden and continued on down the road by herself. "A spunky but hard-headed woman!" I thought to myself. Now for the first time I could see her outline standing up as she walked. She was of medium height, medium build, with a graceful step and carriage and her movements indicated great strength . . . at least, they did to me.

The entire discussion to which I had sat and listened somewhat mystified me. The moment she had gone beyond the confines of the residence, the P.A. turned to me and said, "I want to apologize for not introducing you to her. But it was deliberate on my part."

Then he went on to tell me that she was the strongest willed woman he'd ever met. He admired her, he respected her, but he would not allow sentiment to interfere with his duties and also what he knew was best for the area and for himself.

"There is no doubt about it," he told me, "she is more capable than many men, or most men. She is fearless, courageous, intelligent, but she's still not a man and can't do everything a good man can do. She places me in a most awkward predicament. I just can't refuse to allow her to visit and climb in the area. But one of these days, sure as fate, she's going to get hurt or killed. Can't you just imagine what the press would say about me—allowing a lone, poor, innocent, trusting, defenseless woman to endanger her life in these difficult mountains and glaciers?

"I'm happy that I could keep her out of the Nagir and Hunza area at least. All she can bring me and the people around here is trouble!

"Now again, I felt that if I introduced you to her or her to you there would be a decided clash of temperament and the two of you would be fighting or

arguing all night and there would be no rest, peace or quiet for the rest of us."

Just then Shah Mirzah announced that dinner was ready. As we walked towards the house and dining room, I thought to myself, "What a smart man is my good friend, Habib-ur Rahman Khan. Had he introduced me to that dame, we'd have been battling long into the night! I would have just loved to lock horns with her though—the stubborn, indomitable wench!

I had an idea, also, that the P.A. didn't like or feared argumentative, strong, dominating, forceful women! Who can blame him?

CHAPTER 69

Trader's Tour

I THINK I slept the night through with one eye open, because I was hoping or expecting a call to advise us that a plane had come in. Usually the plane arrived at 6.45, but we'd be notified as soon as it took off from Rawalpindi and would make our preparations. So I was sort of sleeping with an eye and an ear cocked for a knock, a message or a phone call that would relay some word to us that our flight was taking off that morning. But no word came.

As the light of the new day began to streak through the windows of our room, I got up, performed my ablutions and set out for my usual walk around the garden. And as before, I was soon joined by the P.A. —as always, looking immaculate, fresh, alert and raring to go!

"I don't think you've seen my trout pool yet, have you?"

"Why no. Do you have such a thing?"

"Yes! It's strange I haven't shown it to you or that you haven't found it yet. That just illustrates how busy we've been talking about plants and trees in the garden. We haven't had time to see the trout pool where fingerlings are bred for stocking the plausible rivers hereabouts!"

Hardly 50 feet from where I'd passed at least a dozen times, under the shade of an old walnut tree, was the trout pool and there were the fish swimming about. They'd evidently become quite accustomed to visitors because they didn't thrash or swim about in a lather when we watched them.

"What are the chances of a plane getting out this morning?" I asked the P.A.

"Not too good, in my opinion," observed the P.A. "I usually get word from Pindi the moment a plane takes off and the first one would have been here by now. If the weather clears up, they'll still fly. But I'm not expecting a flight today. However, it does look as though the skies are clearing and I'd say there was a good chance of a flight out tomorrow."

"Then I might just as well take full advantage of this day. I haven't been through the bazaars of Gilgit yet, nor have I taken a good look at the town. I think I'll just do that today after breakfast, with your permission. Probably Cec and Jahangir will go, too. I'll ask them anyway."

Then the breakfast call came.

I hadn't seen very much of Jahangir during the past few days. He was staying over at the Gilgit Scout Commander's residence and evidently he'd been kept occupied there in one way or another.

"How about taking in the bazaars and making a

general inspection of the town this morning, Cec?"

"Sounds all right," Cec replied.

"I wonder if Jahangir would care to go along with us? He'd be very handy because he can speak Urdu and there are a few things I might want to buy. Although with the meager amount of rupees we have left, any purchases we make will have to be kept down in the low brackets."

We didn't have too much money between us—that is, Pakistani rupees. By the time we paid the taxi driver off for the haul from Nomal and then the trip up and back from the airport, it took the best of 60 rupees. I needed 68 rupees for the Gilgit to Rawalpindi plane ride. Then, too, I knew we'd require some to hand around to our good servants. A fair tip was the only way we had of thanking them for their courtesies and kindnesses. But I figured we could still spare a few rupees for purchases of small things.

While we knew Jahangir was staying at the Scout Commander's, I had never found out exactly where his residence was.

"I'll have you directed to the residence if you wish," the P.A. said. "Or better still, I'll send one of the men over and have him told that you want to see him."

I asked the P.A. if he could lend me his pith helmet which I used on the trek to Hunza. "Why of course," he said, and in a minute or two, he produced it.

Then we were all set to go. At the gate we met the headmaster of the military school. We told him we were on our way to visit the bazaars and he thought it was a good idea, so he came along, too.

We hadn't taken 20 paces when a white-clad figure appeared in front of us and, lo and behold, it was Jahangir! In the excitement of seeing him dressed

up so lavishly in the flowing pure white robes, I never found out whether we had come upon him by accident or whether the P.A. had sent a messenger over, telling him we wanted him.

"What kind of a get-up is that?" I asked in feigned astonishment.

"This is strictly native costume," he replied. "I haven't had a chance to wear it yet and I thought today would be a good time."

It was most interesting, attractive and becoming, too, because his dark, handsome, boyish face shone out like a star from the white robe. It was made of homespun cotton. The trousers were loose and baggy and so was the shirt. It definitely was a costume suited to the country and its climate.

Off we strode down the road. The section that we were leaving was the location of the government officials' residences and the hospital, as well as the barracks and other military buildings.

All Eastern bazaars are friendly places. I think most Europeans or Westerners coming to the bazaars of the East are too suspicious and on the alert. They have been warned and forewarned that they will be taken advantage of at every turn, that they must bargain and never pay the first asking price, that there are pickpockets and thieves lurking at every stall and that they must be on guard against all kinds and types of chicanery and intrigue.

Sorry I am to disappoint you but the fact is that we found none of these things to be true at any of the bazaars that we visited throughout Persia, Pakistan, Afghanistan, India and elsewhere.

Believing what I had been told, I tried at first as best I knew to bargain and haggle, but I could not bring down the price one iota, with the exception of

a shop in Hong Kong where I bought some ivory at a little less than the asking price.

In Kashmir, I recall, I spent hours examining tablecloths, women's stoles and scarfs, rugs, kerchiefs and beautiful woodenware products and other rarities. I'd made quite a selection of items that I chose very selectively and there were some mighty fine things among them. The total amount of the goods I had intended to purchase was 525 rupees. When everything was about ready to be completed, I offered 500 rupees and the shopkeeper said, "No!" I thought he was just jesting and walked out of the shop, still expecting any moment for him to accept my offer, but I came away without the goods that I wanted. Later, I bought something similar at another shop and this time I paid the asking price. I'm just telling you this to prove that you can't always believe the tales you hear.

The Gilgit shopping center, as I choose to call it, was centered on two streets, forming a T. Practically all, if not all, of the shops were located on these two intersecting thoroughfares.

They are not, in any manner, to be compared with shops or stores as we know them. They are usually shabby, poorly constructed hovels. I often wondered how these people trust their wares to such flimsy buildings. A good push or shove by a strong man would cave in the walls of practically any of them. Yet many of them were bulging with merchandise . . . yes, and valuable merchandise in many instances. 'Tis an indication that the people thereabouts are honest. Most every conceivable commodity required by the natives in the area could be purchased readily at one or another of the shops.

You could buy tobacco, perfume, cosmetics, toothpastes, drugs, talcum, shoes, books, hardware, tooth

brushes, biscuits, tea, coffee and herbs. The two types of stalls that seemed to do the most thriving business were those displaying cloth or woolens and those bulging with groceries, fruits and vegetables.

There were bake shops, but they were so entirely different from anything that we had ever seen or known that we were intrigued as we stood and watched the natives bake the chapatties. Their ovens invariably were either a hole in the ground or raised above the ground level by means of a pile of earth. There was evidently a fire down there somewhere and inside there were one or two shelves on which the flat pancakes of dough were placed by means of a paddle. It only took a couple of minutes for the bread or chapatties to be baked. This was a common scene, found practically all over India and Pakistan.

I was already the owner of one yak tail, one pillbox shaped Hunzan lady's hat and three Hunzan men's hats. Therefore, I wanted two more yak tails and two more ladies' hats. I thought I'd like to give one of the ladies' hats to each of my two daughters, one to my wife and one each of the men's hats to my two sons and keep one for myself.

At one of the shops I found a yak tail. The owner asked 10 rupees for it. I thought it was too much money. He also had one lady's hat. He asked 8 rupees for this. I offered 15 rupees for both but it was turned down. Jahangir said, "I think they're worth it and I'm afraid you won't do any better!"

"Well, we'll try," I replied. "Besides, it's fun and we can come back."

We made the circuit of all the shops and there was not another yak tail to be found in the Gilgit bazaar and very few of the Hunza hats. But eventually there was another shopkeeper who had a hat and he, too,

asked 8 rupees. Looked very much like collusion or price fixing, but I decided I'd best buy it. Then I went back to the first shop and plunked down the 18 rupees for the lady's hat and the yak tail. Therefore, I didn't get any bargains at the Gilgit bazaar . . . and more power to the traders!

We then continued walking around the town. Trying to describe the towns or villages in the East is a most difficult task. They are so utterly unlike anything that the Westerner has ever seen that there isn't any basis for making comparisons.

Even in Gilgit we saw camels. It is both picturesque and interesting to watch their lumbering, unseemly gait. We saw mostly two-humped camels and they were hoary or woolly looking, ungainly and unkempt.

Camels always struck me as being most unfriendly creatures and I understand that they never quite become friendly to man. Those that I saw, and there were many, seemed to resent their lot and never took kindly to carrying their loads or serving their masters. A man can get attached to a horse and probably a horse will occasionally show signs of affection or liking for a man. But I don't think a camel ever would or ever does become a buddy to man in that sense. Undoubtedly he is accepted by man, because he serves him so well over terrain that no other beast could survive on or traverse.

The people of Gilgit were most unlike those of Hunza. As you turned and gazed from one to another at the many people whom you met or saw around you, there were no two faces or bearing or clothes that bore even the slightest resemblance to one another. Every one and every thing was so different.

We in the West are more or less accustomed to a certain pattern of dress and decorum. For example,

most men are clean-shaven. Most business men wear suits. Most laborers wear overalls. Most faces are white or slightly tanned. But here, mercy be, they were black and they were yellow and some were of a lighter hue. Others were a cross between any two of the three. Then again, they ranged in height from giants to dwarfs under 5 feet. They were bearded, they were clean-shaven, they had braids in their hair, they were bald, they wore hats, they were bareheaded, they wore turbans, they wore fezzes . . . and in clothes, where could I start and where could I finish? They wore everything from loin cloths to military dress, besides rags and shirts and suits and jackets. Every form of clothes that the human mind can conceive could be found on the backs of the sojourners in the bazaars of Gilgit.

At one point I set about to write down a description of the various things that these people wore, but after filling page after page, I gave it up in disgust. I hadn't covered a fragment of the different types and kinds of things they wore and I hadn't even reached the stage of foot coverings!

Well, let me end it by saying that the clothing was colorful, unique, strange, unusual, in some cases ideally suited for the occasions, the climate and the surroundings, and in others as unsuited and as anachronistic as furs for the Fiji Islanders or a bikini bathing suit for an Eskimo!

I returned from the Gilgit bazaars richer by a yak tail, two Hunza ladies' hats and a tube of toothpaste . . . apart from the wealth of scenes and people that were inscribed in my memory.

Search though we did through the bazaars of Gilgit, we couldn't find a restaurant—that is, a restaurant as we know them. In fact, there just wasn't any place that

you could get anything to eat, unless you wanted to buy fruits and vegetables or groceries, take them with you and munch them afoot.

We repaired to our quarters and in a few minutes a tray of tea, biscuits and fruit was brought in. I don't know who was watching or looking after our fortunes —the P.A. or Shah Mirzah—but our needs were anticipated and fulfilled to perfection.

I began to feel with regret that this semi-idyllic existence had to end some day. We'd now been in Gilgit four full days and it was just like a gambler betting on a certain specific number turning up . . . the longer he runs without the number turning up, the greater he feels are his chances on the next round. I was getting so I felt more or less sure that tomorrow would be the day. But like the gambler again, I had felt the same yesterday and the day before, too.

CHAPTER 70

I Think 'Tis Curtains

It Was Saturday morning. We had finished breakfast with our kind friend, the P.A. I'd gone back to our quarters to do further work on my postcard writing. I was only there a few minutes when a messenger came in and said, "Plane!"

With that magic word I bounced into the P.A.'s office.

"The plane is just coming in for a landing at the airport and as you have top priority for getting out, you'd better get ready. It will leave in about 20 minutes."

I wondered if the Millers knew. They didn't have a phone in the rest house so there was nothing I could do about it. But I knew they were on the ball and if anything was stirring, they would be sure to acquaint themselves with it.

It didn't take very long to get ready—our baggage

had been semipacked earlier and it was, but for a few touches, ready and waiting.

Then the P.A. signaled to one of his servants and he came down the verandah steps toward us, carrying a large bundle in his arms. He stopped in front of the P.A. who reached and took the bundle. He unrolled it before us . . . it was a large leopard skin!

"This," he said, "is for you. It was shot in the mountains close by and I hope you will accept it as a memento of your stay in Gilgit."

I said very little in reply except, "Thank you very much!" . . . but I think my physical expression conveyed my feelings with greater clarity and purpose than words could have done.

With that the P.A. said he'd like to drive down with us to wish us bon voyage.

Jahangir turned up and I told him the news but he said he wasn't going out just now.

"Why, boy, I thought you'd be glad to get out at the first opportunity!"

"Yes," he said, "I promised my Dad I'd be home in 30 days from the time I set out and I'm two days late now, but I can't leave today. The Commander was called away yesterday and his wife has been ailing for the past day and I won't leave until he returns."

I looked at him affectionately, and thought to myself, "For a 17-year-old boy you certainly show an awful pile of good sense and, what's even more valuable, humility and understanding!"

"Don't forget," he said, "You promised to visit my home in Lahore. I'll be waiting for you when you get back from Afghanistan.

"You'll find traveling to Peshawar across the Khyber Pass into Afghanistan and on to Kabul a long, arduous, tough journey and when you get back, you'll need the

comfort and benefits that my home can provide."

"If what you say is true, Jahangir, and I haven't the least doubt that you know what you're talking about, we'll be mighty glad to take advantage of your kind offer. In any event, Cec and I promised and we'll be there."

As an extra inducement he added, "There'll be inch-thick beef steaks and real bread—not chapatties!"

We waved good-by from the jeep.

I didn't get the reference to the steaks but then Cec told me that he had mentioned to Jahangir that that was one of the things he had missed most in the line of foods since he left home. So, as I would expect, Jahangir was on the beam.

When we pulled up at the airport office, I was tickled to the bottom of my feet to see the Millers there.

The plane had already landed and had most of its cargo unloaded.

I looked up at the sky and there were quite a few clouds scattered thereabouts and I wondered that the plane had taken off from Pindi. But I figured that they'd missed a good many flights during the month of July. The garrison at Gilgit consumes a lot of supplies and the airlift is the only way they can get them in. I guess they reach a stage where they must take a little bit of a chance. Then, thinking it over, I came to the conclusion that it might have been clear in Pindi.

The call came to board the plane and there was room for eight passengers . . . the Millers, Cec and I and four young lads who had come in with the professor, some of the same ones we had met at the Mir's.

My good-by to the P.A. was a handclasp that lasted minutes. I looked at him with genuine affection and admiration and said, "You promised, if humanly possible, to come and visit me in Canada—remember?"

"Most certainly," he replied. "And you said you'd come back to Gilgit and go with me to my Shangri-la —remember?"

"I sure do!" I said and we boarded the plane.

The pilot was revving up the motor when with a flash and a sickly feeling, I remembered that I had intended mailing all those postcards over which I had labored so assiduously. I thought the Gilgit postmark would be the most unusual. You see, letters mailed from Hunza do not read Hunza but "Experimental P.O." Therefore, to my way of thinking, the Gilgit cancellation would be more desirable.

But I had fouled things up! I dashed to the pilot's quarters, explained my plight and in two minutes flat I was handing the package of postcards to a corporal who happened to be standing just outside the plane door. I didn't need to say a word . . . he understood. Then I withdrew, the door was banged shut and the motors were revved up again.

When the plane takes off at Gilgit, it is just as though it were taking off from a huge bowl, for the airport is surrounded on all sides by mountains, not little hills. Therefore they require a long runway and when they get off the ground, they must gain altitude as speedily as possible.

I had read of others taking this same ride and in each case they wondered if the plane would make altitude fast enough. I knew and felt that they would but nevertheless, I could readily see why passengers would have those feelings of misgiving. As soon as you are aloft you are right into the heart of the mountains . . . and what mountains!

Soon we were soaring and I was eagerly watching. I didn't want to miss a thing. This wasn't called the most dangerous scheduled air flight in the world for nothing.

The mountain scenery was such that one can only try, in a feeble way, to describe it. The flight *in* was one thing, but this was out!

The plane usually travels at about 17,000 feet and at that, it is only 1,000 or 2,000 feet above the smaller mountains and on both sides the peaks tower above the plane, making you feel as though you were cooped up in a canyon. The plane banked and gracefully twisted and turned.

In some of the valleys I saw lakes that looked like tiny mirrors. Again there were the villages, ranging from two or 3 huts and a spot of green to many huts and terraced fields. Occasionally a nod of trees was seen on the mountainside, but this was unusual. Most of the mountains were unclothed except for those that were clad with snow. Nameless peaks surrounded us—right, left, fore and aft—semiveiled, exposing but a titbit of their charm and loveliness.

The sunshine played on the ice and snow giving the effect of someone holding a mirror and dancing the beam from place to place. No two hills or valleys or peaks were even remotely alike. I was dazzled by the sheer grandeur of this mountain vastness. I thought of every little valley as a man's individual Shangri-la.

There below was the mighty Indus and every few minutes we'd see it being joined by one of its tributaries. We saw the creeks and nullahs that in turn fed the tributaries. We saw the trickle fecundated, become a pregnant rivulet and then spawn into a mountain rill. We not only saw rivers born, we watched them being conceived. And we were justly thrilled.

We saw the various elements, that are part of nature and her scheme of things, working together as a team and what a team they make! We watched them display their skill on the world's tallest and hardest stone

mountains with but the most primitive, but yet the most powerful of all tools. And each tool was used to its full known capacity—moisture, sun, air, snow, frost and last but not least, time.

The impenetrable, unshatterable walls of stone became boulders, rocks, gravel, sand and then at last, soil. A speck of green appeared and when man saw that flush of green, he hied thither and adapted his hands and his back to the task of aiding nature—to thrive and flourish. Soon terraced fields were seen and huts of mud and stone sprang up . . . and then he harnessed the glaciers and tamed and tethered many beasts.

That is the way it was and that is the way it should be!

When man knew but the good earth and the birds in the trees and the beasts of the forests and field, he knew nothing but the joy of living. I'm still foolish enough to believe that man has gained little or nothing when he learned or sought to leave the land from whence he sprung.

Suddenly I could see nothing! Alarmed, I realized that we had run into a maze of clouds. It was just like being completely surrounded by a dense fog. I was frightened, genuinely frightened. I knew what lay to the right and to the left. The only safe thing for the pilot was to sail right through that narrow breach or corridor in the mountain. But how could he—with his vision completely obstructed?

I believe I held my breath for minutes but the clouds held fast. I noticed moisture appear on the window. I looked about me at the other passengers. Cec showed no sign of being perturbed. Perhaps I didn't either, but I know what I felt like inside. The Millers didn't seem to be too much concerned. The

boys were chattering away but it was obvious that they were uneasy. A little later one of them broke into tears.

Miller leaned over and whispered in my ear, "Boy, we're lucky to get out. This will be the last flight today and maybe for a few days now."

I said, "I'm just hoping that it isn't the last flight—period!"

He smiled warmly. He was obviously much braver than I.

I said to myself, "John, this is it. You'd better make your peace!"

I lifted my eyes heavenward and made my peace. Honest, I felt better after that, although I still didn't see any hope.

Please don't get me wrong, folks. I've flown many, many thousands of miles and I'm always a little bit fearful of plane rides but this time I was terrified! I couldn't see how we could possibly get out. My eyes were kept glued to that window, hoping and praying for a wisp of light.

Then suddenly we emerged from grey murky obscurity into space where at least one could see something. No, it was not clear blue sky we came into, but a drizzle. The clouds had opened up a little or were now above us.

Below a few thousand feet I could distinctly see the pattern of the city streets and the rooftops and the vehicles moving about. But it was apparent that the mist held fast right into the very city of Rawalpindi itself.

I would like to say that a load was lifted from my heart and that I felt exhilarated and wanted to jump with joy, but really it was nothing like that. Just a few moments ago I thought I faced death. Now I was comparatively safe again. I thought the transition

would be a terrific impact and I was somewhat disappointed to find that my reaction was quite calm.

This led me to wonder just how much difference there is between life and death. I guess that depends upon circumstances and a viewpoint. But I suspect that the difference is this: the breadth of a hair.

The normal time for this precarious flight is one hour and 10 minutes. From the time we left Gilgit to the minute our plane touched the runway at Pindi was one hour and 25 minutes by both Cec's and Friend Miller's wristwatches. I haven't even yet been able to figure out or find out what we were doing or where we were going, for that extra 15 minutes that we were floundering about in the air midst those massive mountains.

If I were an air pilot, I don't think that this would be one of the runs that I would care to accept, especially as a steady diet. I do know that these pilots were originally British trained. Perhaps today they don't need help, guidance or teaching from Britain, America or anywhere else. But I want to pay tribute to what I believe to be a mighty wonderful force of flying men!

There may be better flying men . . . I am not a judge of flying ability . . . but I have during my lifetime flown about 50,000 miles and I salute the pilots who take the route from Pindi to Gilgit, as the world's finest!

CHAPTER 71

Misconceptions

THIS CHAPTER I find the hardest of all the chapters in the book to write.

So many gross errors or misrepresentations concerning Hunza have been given widespread publicity that I felt it was high time these errors were corrected.

It is established that a writer or a speaker who makes statements must stand behind the statements that he makes. That is all well and good in such instances and cases where the truth can be readily verified by means of encyclopedias, dictionaries or other reliable sources of information.

Inasmuch as Hunza is concerned, this definitely is not possible. To begin with, the language, Burushaski, is spoken only by the people in Hunza, Nagir and in a small area thereabouts. Dr. Berger in his intimate studies and broad travels has come upon only one other spot on the earth's surface where a similar tongue is

spoken. The good professor espouses the theory that the Burushaski language is genealogically related to the language of the Basques, spoken only by a handful of these people who live in the Pyrenees in southern France and northern Spain. Therefore, it is difficult, if not impossible, for any stranger or outsider to have a good working knowledge of the language.

When you are given the name of a place or a thing and wish to write it down, you have to do it entirely by means of phonics. For example, I wanted to know the name given to a part of the flour mill and after much actual jawing, I wrote down the word "yine." Later, in checking with another Hunzan who articulated in deliberate, clearcut fashion for me, I got the word "yang." Now repeat those two words over yourself and see just how much similarity there really is between them.

I sought the name of the word given to the galleries —that is, the wooden galleries or it could be the stone galleries that were built up along the ledges when the road fell away. One of the writers had given the name for these places as "rafiks," which I followed. But I also had come across the word "paharis" when I was in Hunza and they didn't seem to use or have heard the word "rafik."

Then upon investigation, I find that the words "rafik" and "paharis" are not the actual words used to describe this bit of fancy roadwork. The meaning of "rafik" is actually Arabic for a companion or comrade and the meaning of "paharis" is Urdu for "people who live in mountainous regions." From usage so far and the best of searching, it appears that "rafik" is the term used to describe the built up stone galleries that shore up a "fallen away" gap of road. "Paharis" is the term for the wooden platforms that are erected over

"nothing" where the ledge once led . . . a few well appointed steel rods forced into fissures being the total support. As yet I have failed to discover or learn the proper word describing these galleries.

I must admit that many or most of the errors or misconceptions concerning Hunza are due to the fact that insufficient time was spent by some of the writers who visited Hunza.

At first it was my wish to pass by this chapter on misconceptions because I did not feel that I should be involved in a hassle with other writers. But then I asked myself if I had any doubts as to whether or not I was right. And this made me feel that I definitely wanted to write the chapter on misconceptions.

It is not my intent or desire to be contradictory nor arbitrary. I am not seeking to pick a quarrel with anyone. But the facts and statements herein related are based on my seeing, hearing, research, questioning and investigating.

I have tried to make my book as accurate as humanly possible. And if and when errors are found, I trust they will be brought quite forcibly to my attention. I would like to believe that if I can dish it out, I can take it, too!

Fertile valleys—Some writers have referred to various valleys in Hunza as fertile valleys. By the standards to which we are accustomed, there is not one single fertile valley in all of Hunza. That the soil is productive and the valley green and beautiful, no one will deny. But at best the soil in Hunza is shallow and to be productive, it must be maintained assiduously. I repeat, in Hunza there are no such things as naturally fertile valleys as compared, for example, to parts of the Willamette Valley in Oregon.

Hunza is scarcely 60 *miles long,* says one writer. Another says it is 80 miles long and elsewhere I saw it

mentioned as being 100 miles long.

A few miles above the spot where the Hunza River meets the Gilgit is a village called Secunderabad. It is here that Hunza begins and if you follow the Hunza River up to its source beyond Misgar, almost on the Chinese border, where it springs from a glacier, you will find in following the contours of the river that the country is almost 200 miles long. I have carefully checked this figure with the best authorities—the Mir being one of them—and I found that the 200 mile figure was as close as it can possibly be measured.

They are Asians. Of course they are Asians because they dwell in Asia. But in appearance they are definitely unlike Asians. Without trying to sound dramatic or authoritative, the general appearance of the people of Hunza shows marked European characteristics. They are totally unlike the Indians, the Afghans or the Chinese. To me they looked like the Mediterranean peoples. At this stage I am not harping or relying on the fact that they claim to be descendants of Alexander the Great or some of his soldiers.

Primitive—Most writers refer to them as primitive people or say that their way of life is primitive. I will agree with the use of that term in describing the people of Hunza, if you will agree with me that the Christian world is primitive, because it too follows the teachings of the Bible which was written 3,000 or 4,000 years ago. It is agreed that the people of Hunza follow a primitive form of agriculture and use no chemical fertilizers or modern sprays and insecticides. But then, they don't need chemical insecticides and chemical fertilizers. They use no modern machinery on their small, hard won, shallow surfaced fields. Their conduits which guide the glacial waters to their fields are, I agree, primitive, but no better form is known any-

where. They use water to turn the mill that grinds their bread and that is primitive. But many thousands of people throughout the world would say that it is the right way. The adroitness and the ability of the Hunzan men would match that of any people in the Western world.

I cannot say that I found anything about them that was primitive. Further, they can choose the modern way of life if they so desire it. But the only people who seek it are those who are forced to leave Hunza because of the shortage of actual living room.

Poverty stricken—One writer referred to them as being poverty stricken. If the beast of the fields and forests and the birds of the air are poverty stricken, then I guess we would have to admit that the people of Hunza are poverty stricken as well. If you want to feel sorry for birds, because they have to seek shelter in their unheated nests high up in the trees, where the winds blow around them, and because they do not have oil heating for their nests or motors for their wings as a sign of poverty, then I will be forced to agree with you.

As long as the people of Hunza are free, have a bit of land to till and a house of their own that is not mortgaged or tax-ridden and are in good health and attain long life, I definitely cannot accede that they are poverty stricken.

Fair complexioned—Now and then some author refers to them as being fair complexioned. I did not see one fair complexioned person in all of Hunza. Perhaps the writers meant to say that they were Caucasians, which is true, as compared to Orientals or Negroes. They are not a fair people any more than the Spaniards, Italians or Greeks are fair complexioned peoples.

Precise, exacting—An occasional writer sought to

compliment them by mentioning among their qualities the fact that they were precise and exacting. That statement is about as far-fetched as a statement can be.

In the cities of Asia and when dealing with government officials, one found them quite observant of time. An appointment for a certain hour was usually kept at that hour. However, in dealing with the people of Hunza I found that time and distance were meaningless. All rivers were nullahs, all mountains were domani. Haste and speed caused consternation. They did not understand the necessity or need for it. I stress again however, that in the official capacity this did not necessarily apply.

Birth control—More than one writer, and some who should have had more common sense, has referred to the extraordinary method of birth control as practiced by the people of Hunza. From my observations I would state clearly and to the point, that they don't know what birth control means and it is from my observations and conclusion definitely not practiced.

The average family in Hunza consists of 7 people which means that they have 5 living children. Many have more, some have less. If you can call that birth control by any stretch of the imagination, well, that's your privilege.

Even the most primitive of people know that as long as the child is sucking at the mammary glands the ovum somehow doesn't come down the fallopian tubes . . . nature's own method of survival, as common sense will indicate.

I know—I know—I know that some or many obstetricians and general practitioners say that it doesn't mean a thing, but they are just trying to prove that science is greater than empiricism. Sure, I know that conception can take place under the circumstances

mentioned above and so do women who have reached the menopause age become pregnant, but it doesn't happen every day.

Siring children at 90 *and* 100 *years of age*—The only conclusive proof or record that I could find concerning men well up in years siring children was that of the Mir's grandfather, Sir Mohomed Nazim Khan, K.C.I.E. It is definitely recorded that he sired a son when he was in his 75th year.

Upon questioning and during discourse with the Mir, the resident doctor and the affected individuals themselves, it is clearly established that the siring of offspring at the age of 70 and upwards is quite common. Invariably it was revealed in these studies that the men had married younger women, their second or third wives. It is suggested that the answer lies somewhere close to this very important related fact.

Living to the age of 140 *years.* The oldest man that I could find in Hunza was said to be 105 years old. I want to stress firmly that no vital statistics are kept in Hunza. Therefore it is not easy to establish any definite age or date. I will, however, accept this old man's age as being correct and established beyond doubt. The fact that he was alive before the Mir's grandfather was born (who died when 79 years of age in 1938) is ample proof that the statement is correct and true.

There are many people in Hunza over 90 years of age, quite a few over 95 years of age and some over 100 years.

Their women are beautiful when they are 70 *and* 80 *years old.* This I will agree is a statement that depends entirely upon a man's appreciation or understanding of beauty. I have seen old women of 80 who I thought were beautiful in a frail, wrinkled, grandmotherly way.

I found the Rani to be the most beautiful woman in Hunza. I didn't dare ask her age, but I know she was married to the present Mir in 1934. Therefore she must be close to or in her 40's. She could undoubtedly pass with any woman in her early 20's. But there were few, if any, women in Hunza like her.

I further will grant that I, or anyone else for that matter, would have very little opportunity of seeing Hunzan women at what might be their best. To state my views candidly, I'd say the men definitely looked youthful, but the women looked to be older than their years.

Perfect health—I have never seen, as yet, a race of people that was as healthy as the people of Hunza. But to say that they were a race that enjoyed perfect health, I would consider a bit of an exaggeration, because the doctor does treat a few patients now and then and the hospital does harbor a few sick people. I must honestly admit that I did not see any sick people in Hunza, but there are quite a few who do not enjoy perfect health.

A pre-Bronze Age people—Here I suspect someone wanted to show his knowledge in archeology or anthropology, whichever it may be. (I am expressing *my* ignorance to begin with.) They are no more Bronze Age than was the writer who referred to them as such. This would take them back between 4,000 and 5,000 years which is utter and sheer "poppycock." He further stated that they were isolated for 2,000 years. If that is true, they were isolated because they wanted to remain that way.

It is a fact that there is a caravan trail right through Hunza. It is the shortest route from China to Persia and leads through Hunza, past Gilgit and across the Babusar Pass and then on westward or southwestward.

I am sure that a people who saw these caravans coming and going could not be called isolated by any stretch of the imagination. They just like their little piece of paradise too well to leave it.

Hunza empties into the Indus. Two famed writers who should know better . . . or should I say, should have checked more closely . . . made the statement that the Hunza River flows into the Indus. Even a cursory glance at a map would show that the Hunza empties into the Gilgit and the Gilgit empties into the Indus.

Mother-in-law taken along on honeymoon—This bit of stupidity, or should I say absurdity, appeared in no less than two of the foremost publications in America.

Who ever heard of a honeymoon in Hunza? Not having a Niagara Falls, probably they'd go up and sit on top of Rakaposhi with the mother-in-law between them to cool their ardor.

When the Mir made this statement, he was joking, never believing for a moment that anyone would take such a broad joke as being factual.

Hunzans walk 60 *to* 100 *miles as though it were nothing.* In fact, one author stated somewhere that the Hunzans could walk 60 miles easier than she could walk upstairs.

I will readily grant that I believe the Hunzan people are the world's best walkers and well they would have to be, because there just happens to be no other mode of locomotion. I'll even go further and say that all through my travels in that territory I did not once see a Hunzan man, or for that matter a Nagirwal, who appeared to be worn from the rugged walks and climbs. So it is clear that they have tremendous reserves of energy and stamina . . . but let's not go overboard!

Anyone can visit Hunza. Contrary to the assertion made by one writer that anyone can get into Hunza, I

would like to mention that since 1950 here is a list of all the people who were allowed into Hunza from the outside world: Franc and Jean Shore, April, 1952; Lowell Thomas, Jr. in December, 1954; Benjamin Ruhe in July, 1956; Barbara Mons, May, 1956; Dr. Allen Banik, July, 1958; and John Tobe and Cecil Brunton in July, 1959.

I've a letter here from the Embassy of Pakistan, Washington, D. C.:

"Dear Dr. Keller,

"Please refer to your letter of September 29, 1959, regarding your request to visit Hunza.

"The Government of Pakistan have regretted their inability to grant permission for your visit to this area. We would like to mention that we have received a number of similar requests from other individuals and we have not been able to comply with those requests.

"We have been informed by Dr. Francis Pottenger of Monrovia, California, that he and Dr. William Albrecht of the University of Missouri, also planned to accompany you on your proposed visit. We would appreciate it if you could kindly convey our regrets to Dr. Albrecht. We are writing to Dr. Pottenger ourselves.

"Yours sincerely,

A. Fatch, Second Secretary"

This should establish clearly, once and for all, whether or not it is easy to get into Hunza.

Court fines go to Mir's treasury. This statement was made by one of the writers on Hunza and when brought to the Mir's attention by me, it was vigorously denied.

Any revenue obtained in this manner goes to the state and helps maintain the canals and aqueduct systems. Further, the total obtained from fines during a year would not exceed 200 rupees, about $40.00.

The piano in the palace was brought by the Mir's grandfather. This was stated in one of the books I read about Hunza.

The story from the Mir's own lips is, "The piano was brought to Gilgit via Bandipoor and Burzil Pass from Kashmir for the Political Agent who was British. It was installed in the Political Agent's house in Gilgit in 1895. In 1947 when the partition came, it was presented to me by the last British Political Agent, Colonel R. N. Bacon, along with the Union Jack which is unfurled in Gilgit. The piano was brought to Baltit on the backs of 24 men."

Disease is unknown in Hunza. Oh, how I wish that were true! It was the fondest wish of my heart and soul when I left for Hunza that I could return and be able to attest the fact that disease is unknown in that country.

From definite assertions made by the doctor who was stationed at Aliabad in Hunza, it is true that such diseases as cancer, diabetes, heart disease and hypertension are absolutely unknown in Hunza. But there are other diseases, perhaps not as crucial but, nevertheless, maladies of a serious nature.

As more of civilization's luxuries become known and used in Hunza, it is assured that many more of the diseases of civilization, as yet unknown in Hunza, will make their way into that country.

No infant mortality—I am unable to speak for the past, but at the present day infant mortality is known in Hunza. As mentioned elsewhere in this book, statistics are unavailable as no records are kept. But the present doctor in Aliabad forcibly states that infant mortality is a force to be reckoned with in Hunza at the present time.

Hunzan fruits taste better than those of other parts of the world. Most travelers who reach Hunza invariably state that the apricots and other fruits found there are much better flavored than those found in other parts of the world. I did not find this to be true.

Because they do not grow fruits for export or shipping, they can be tree-ripened. Therefore they have a better flavor than fruit that has to be picked in a green or unripened state. It is this fact that makes many people believe that Hunzan fruits taste better than the fruit they are accustomed to eating.

I happen to live in a part of the world where fruit is grown extensively and I must state categorically that Hunzan fruit does not taste any better than that grown on the farms adjacent to my home. Here, also, it must be admitted that most of the fruit I eat, especially during the fruit season, is also tree-ripened.

The people of Hunza are ignorant and uneducated. From my association with the people of Hunza, I must state boldly that they are neither ignorant nor uneducated.

There are schools of the same type as our grade schools in every large center in Hunza. It is admitted that only the male children are taught in these schools and there is no formal education offered to girls. This school system is entirely free and has been in existence for more than 25 years. It is emphasized that the native language of the people of Hunza is Burushaski and it is an unwritten language. However, they teach Urdu, Persian and other essential subjects. The intelligence and the abilities of the natives of Hunza rank with those found throughout the world.

The people are fierce and dangerous. There have been only 3 cases of murder recorded in Hunza in the

past 40 years. Never to my knowledge has a stranger or a visitor ever been harmed or injured.

In bygone days the Hunzans were considered good fighting men and were feared by the Chinese, the Afghans and neighboring tribes. It is a fact that they have only been conquered or beaten once in their history and that was by a British force that defeated them at the Battle of Nilt. The British did not seek to conquer the country. It was at the time when the British were the rulers of India. They requested that the Mir of Hunza allow free passage of the mail to Kashgar in China. The Mir at that time, Safdar Ali, felt that he could count upon the aid of the Russians and the Chinese and challenged the British authority. Then the British force went into the field and it required deliberation and courage to assault the high fortress, but it was accomplished by the British and the Mir fled for his life. The British then appointed his brother as the ruler and departed peacefully. Apart from this, the British did not interfere in the affairs of the Hunzans.

You lose face if you carry anything yourself or do any work. In all my travels throughout the world, including Hunza, I always did my share of the carrying. I wasn't going to stand by and see one or two men burdened down with my belongings while I walked about empty handed. I will not allow it to be said that I lost face because of this.

I don't want it to be thought that I am better than anyone else nor will I allow them to think that they are better than I. Wherever there was work to be done or burdens to be borne, I always did my share and I intend to keep on doing it.

Hunza in the Himalayas. Some writers keep referring to Hunza, Gilgit and Rakaposhi as being in the

Himalayas. They call Hunza "The Lost Kingdom of the Himalayas," "Himalayan Valley" and "Himalayan Region" and make other erroneous references.

However, truth is truth, fact is fact, and Hunza, Nagir, Gilgit and Rakaposhi are all in the Karakorums and the Karakorums are a mountain system of their own and are not part or parcel of the Himalayas.

How these misconceptions came into existence, I am not prepared to state, but when dealing and conjecturing with a country as fascinating as Hunza, that lends enchantment to the heart and escape to the mind, one can understand errors mushrooming into life.

Whether or not I have exploded any myths concerning this fabulous country depends entirely upon what you have read or heard and your individual viewpoint. I returned from Hunza with the conviction that I had seen, visited and been among one of the most fabulous peoples on the face of the earth.

Perhaps I have shattered your illusions. If so, I am genuinely sorry because in this modern day and age, a man's soul needs some illusions and I would be the last man to deprive you of them. Yet, it was my purpose when I went to Hunza and then decided to write this book, to tell the truth and lay the facts before you as I found them. That is what I have done.

If I have failed you or brought your idols tumbling at your feet, I am sorry! Yet in spite of any shortcomings that have been exposed in my narrative, the little hidden kingdom of the Karakorums will always be "Shangri-la" to me.

CHAPTER 72

Reflections

I'D BEEN in Hunza for a few days, when it suddenly dawned upon me that there was something unusual about the demeanor, the countenance and the expression on the faces of people. I didn't allow it to particularly prey on my mind . . . yet that feeling remained with me during my entire stay and wanderings throughout that land.

I couldn't put my finger on it, but that intangible difference eluded me, though I was within reach of mentally snaring it on many occasions. Even after I reached home, one night when in a meditative mood, I went over this particular situation in my mind carefully . . . but I couldn't fathom the mystery. Still, I kept asking myself what there was about the people of Hunza that was so unlike the people of the West. Yes, and even unlike the people of the East . . . because there was that marked difference that distinguished

them from any other group of people that I have met or seen anywhere.

I discussed the situation with friends and acquaintances. I mentioned it to folks whose experience and intelligence I respected—thinking, hoping that they could give me a clue to the answer. But nothing came of it. I was still floundering and groping about in the dark.

'Twas a blizzardly night in March . . . I sat in my office at the nursery . . . writing. Suddenly the answer came to me . . . and it was so obvious, so apparent and so simple that I am ashamed I hadn't come up with the answer on the spot.

Perhaps you are more alert than I and you have already guessed the answer. And if you have, I compliment you. You have your ears and your eyes open . . . and you have benefited greatly from the written experiences of my travels in Hunza.

The big thing—the important thing—the simple thing that I discovered was the fact that the people of Hunza find joy and happiness in simply being alive. Living, in itself, is to them the grandest, the greatest and the most fascinating adventure in the world.

We in the Western world have 1,001 things to please us, to entertain and excite us, to thrill and enthrall us. The people of Hunza—they have their little cradle in the sun and that is all!

We must have cocktails and drinking parties to get ourselves into a mood. We must parade off to the theatre to get a laugh and relaxation. We go to a doctor or a priest for comfort and assurance.

The people of Hunza get their joy and pleasures out of the simple things in life—the natural, the commonplace, the ordinary. They are, from infancy to old age, continually attuned to nature. They are intelligent—

they look intelligent. Yet the happy carefree outlook of a child bespeaks their countenance.

We seek relief from our troubles and woes by entertainment, excitement, smoking and drinking.

Let us face the realities of life for what they are. Is it not a fact that our way—our modern way of living—has got out of hand and is now too much for us and we just can't cope with it? That is why we release our pent up furies and frustrations in drink and smoke. Is it not true that we have become a serious, troubled, dour race of people and that too many—yes, too many —responsibilities are oppressing our minds?

No people in the world's history have been so burdened with responsibilities as we in America. The world wars weren't ours, yet we had to become involved . . . and the world looks to us now to enforce or maintain world peace. And what a herculean task it is!

We have the burden of education—not only for ourselves, but for most of the world. Our people have become sick and disease ridden. We have to worry about the maintenance of elaborate homes, automobiles, appliances. We have to consider our vocations and our means and sources of food. We must be ever vigilant . . . there's both foreign encroachment and our own politicians to consider. We have to worry about mortgages, loans, financing, insurance, taxes, interest and the world's most expensive political setups.

We must not only be concerned about our wives and our children and ourselves, but we must share the responsibilities of our neighbors, our countrymen, and now, we have also included the rest of the world.

There no longer exists such a thing as individuality within us . . . for we are but one of almost 200,000,000 bees—all busy and buzzing in unison, creating a great institution. But who wants to be a bee in a hive or a

number in an institution?

Let's face it! Isn't it true that our responsibilities are becoming too big a burden for us? Aren't we trying or attempting to encompass a little too much? Aren't we reaching beyond our ken—beyond our abilities?

You see, the people of Hunza aren't burdened with all the things I've mentioned above, and therefore, it is easy to see why they enjoy just being alive and healthy.

It must be recognized that the people of Hunza lead, probably, what is the most simple life known to any people on the face of the globe. They are not trying to master the world, their own fates or that of their neighbors. They are busily occupied in looking after just themselves.

Selfish? I don't know. They certainly don't interfere with anyone else or ask anyone for anything. In Hunza a man's responsibilities consist of tilling a bit of soil to produce food for himself and the members of his household. The house is actually small—usually a two-roomed affair. He has to make provisions to store sufficient food for his winter needs—plus a mite for a neighbor who might run short. Then he may be called upon to contribute a day's work or two a year on the roads or toward maintaining the aqueducts. And that's it! From there on out, his time, his life and his liberty are his own. They even have it better than the red Indians in America . . . because the Hunzans have a permanent abode rather than a windy tent.

Do you think that mankind can improve on a setup like that?

It could be that some of our difficulties stem from the fact that we try to work against nature, whereas in Hunza, when nature pulls the switch and brings on winter or creates other conditions that bring activities

to a halt, the people are resigned to it for the time being. They have found that they can't stem the avalanches or the receding glaciers. So they work with them, instead of against them.

It would be sheer "humbug" on my part to tell you that the people of Hunza have no responsibilities and no worries or cares, because we all know that no human being can exist on the face of the earth without some. But the people of Hunza have learned not to burden themselves with any more than they can help . . . and they stay quite clear of entanglements.

Most of their cares consist of sowing their crops at the right time, harvesting them before the bad weather sets in, storing sufficient to last through the winter and procuring a bit of fuel.

They lack the continued harassments of our modern, up-to-date civilization. One big thing to bear in mind is that the people of Hunza do not have an expensive, elaborate, many tentacled political setup. Hunza has a government of the simplest form . . . and apart from being an emblem and a guide, it does not interfere with or does very little for the inhabitants of Hunza. No government does anything for any people that the people could not do better for themselves if properly organized . . . this holds true anywhere in the world.

Have we ever stopped to think just what a large proportion of our daily work goes for maintaining our government and for which we receive neither remuneration nor thanks? During World War II, I was astounded to learn that it took 30 men behind the lines to keep one man up front. I discredited it and refused to believe it . . . but subsequently, after tracking down the source of the report, I learned that it is true and that for every fighting man there must be 30 down the line to lend support.

Well, I had to accept the fact that there were 30 men for every fighting man . . . but no one will ever make me believe that it is necessary. Why this is, I don't know. But it seems that everybody wants to help to support a fighting man. Therefore, all and sundry latch onto the hero and do a lick here and there . . . and of course demand and receive good pay for it!

This kind of a setup, the people of Hunza do not have or subscribe to. Perhaps herein lies the distinction between paradise and the other place.

Now, let me get down to bedrock and examine and discuss the health of the people. When actually on the scene, one can easily get carried away. Therefore, it is wise to wait, and reach a decision after time has mellowed the experiences and observations. At present I am convinced that good health is a natural development of the way of life of the people of Hunza. And it will remain theirs as long as they follow the same simple life that they have followed for almost 2,000 years.

Should our modern civilization make inroads into Hunza's culture and should the Hunzans seek to derive the benefits and comforts we have in the West, they will have to pay the price as the attached tags will indicate.

If the people of Hunza want to buy into civilization, they will have to subscribe at the same rates as the others . . . by a breakdown in their health and a shortening of their long life.

It must be related that I am neither amazed nor astounded at the remarkable health of these fine people. To tell the truth, I'm not even surprised . . . because after I've had a chance to study the situation and observe it objectively, I ask, "Why shouldn't they be healthy, why shouldn't they be strong, why shouldn't

they have the powers of endurance that they possess? Heavens to Betsy, why not?"

They lead a life that nature intended and equipped man to lead. They eat the food that nature provided for man to use. They do the kind of work that nature expected a man to perform. In every case, they have cooperated and worked together with nature. Therefore, I cannot see where the results could be any different.

Good health and long life are the simple products of natural living—according to nature's laws.

Here and now, I refuse to become involved in a long harangue or bickering about the evils of modernization, of civilization, of chemicals, of fertilizers and any number of other questionable detriments. I am not seeking to curry favor with one group or to antagonize another. I am completely and whole-heartedly concerned with the why's and wherefore's of the health of a remarkable people.

I have earnestly sought to find a way and a means that I might contribute something of value to the people of Hunza—that might improve their health or aid in their longevity. I've had it drilled into me that with our knowledge, techniques and hygiene in hospitals, institutions, medical care and the healing arts, we are miles and miles ahead of any other people of the world.

After all, I've had this type of propaganda and knowledge pumped into me for almost 50 years—ever since I was a baby. And I believed it! But I learned, to my joy and surprise, that, when people live according to the laws of nature, the modern healing arts and their accoutrements and attributes are completely superfluous.

Would the big boons of modern civilization be of any

value to the people of Hunza? Let's examine them.

Let's start with pasteurization. Well, it would be very difficult to pasteurize in Hunza. First of all, they don't have the means of providing the required heat. Besides, they don't suffer from any conditions which pasteurization would cure—if it does cure anything.

How about hospitalization? Well, they have a comparatively new, modern hospital in Aliabad, but the people don't use it very much. They distrust the hospital and they distrust the doctor, even though he is a fine capable fellow. Besides, I did not notice, particularly, any sick or ailing people sitting around, waiting for a hospital bed.

Then how about inoculations? To begin with, what would you inoculate them against? They don't seem to have many, if any, of our diseases. Then, too, there are no inoculations against cancer, diabetes, heart disease, arthritis and such, anyway. Oh, yes . . . besides, these diseases have never been known in Hunza . . . not even poliomyelitis.

The Mir has a huge medicine chest that was given to him by the German expedition, which was stationed across the river in Nagir. Yes, it did prove most useful —for it helped a man get well. However, I must admit rather dejectedly that the man the medicine chest helped was my companion and not a citizen of Hunza.

They could use a dentist and right here you have struck gold! However, it would be most difficult to get a dentist to set up shop in Hunza, unless he were given room in the Mir's residence, for that's the only place where electric power is provided . . . unless the dentist didn't mind going back to the old days when the old foot pedal was used for power.

But let's be realistic about it! Wouldn't it be much better to give the people of Hunza back their old

natural salt, which was mined at the confluence of the Mustagh and Shimshal Rivers? Then a dentist wouldn't be necessary. I trust you will pardon me if, here and there, as the situation demands, I become my own interrogator.

So after all is examined and said and done, how can the Western world help the people of Hunza?

If you asked me this question, I wouldn't want to answer it openly or boldly. But if you pressed me, reluctantly I'd say that the greatest contribution that the West can make to Hunza, or to their good health and longevity, is to stay away. Leave Hunza alone!

Somebody asked me if I would like to live in Hunza. In some respects, that is an unfair question.

It's like this. The climate of California is considered to be the most salubrious and pleasant in all of the United States. Well, why don't all the people of the United States move to California? Economic reasons? That might be a factor . . . but not a very important one. There are other considerations, too, I guess. But basically, everyone doesn't want to live in California—even if it has the most wonderful climate and they have sunshine all the time.

I'd love to go back to Hunza and spend a few more weeks there . . . and if I had been born in Hunza, I'm sure I'd never want to leave the place. But I doubt if, at my age, I'd be able to adjust myself to a change as drastic as the one I would have to meet in Hunza. After all, I am a product of Western civilization—whatever that is.

"Do you think conditions would be too difficult for you in Hunza?"

I believe a young, normal, healthy, strong individual of sound mind could adjust himself to the conditions of Hunza without too much trouble. I am not maintain-

ing, or even suggesting, that the people of Hunza are supermen. I consider them every bit as good as we are . . . but I do not admit they are better, except physically.

I am not a Hunzaphile . . . any more than I am an Anglophile or an Americaphile. I prefer to call myself a Homophile. I like all people and all human beings—except the dastardly ones.

"Would you change anything in Hunza if you could?"

I think I have outlined, in a chapter in the book, that I could not make one suggestion that would improve their life, their health and their way of living . . . except to give them back their old salt mine.

"Do you think if I had a serious or deadly disease, I could cure it by going to Hunza? I'm referring specifically to a disease that is unknown in Hunza."

You're asking and I'm going to answer. If you went to Hunza and could live as they live and eat the way they eat and work in the manner they work, then I certainly believe that you would partake of the health that they enjoy. But first you've got to be able to get into Hunza . . . which at this time is . . . impossible!

"If some people from Hunza came to live in America, would they still enjoy their bountiful health?"

I'm ready with an answer. If they adopted our methods of eating and drinking and working, they'd probably run into the same diseases and illnesses and what-not that we have. But if they followed the way of life and natural living that they did in Hunza, I think they'd remain as healthy as they were back home.

Again, I want to reiterate at this time that I didn't go to Hunza to prove or disprove anything. I went to Hunza to see, to observe and to learn.

"Have you learned anything from the people of Hunza that can benefit you? In other words, have you profited, inasmuch as your own health is concerned,

from what you saw in Hunza?"

I'm glad to have the opportunity of answering this question. I believe the lessons I have learned in Hunza have already removed years from my appearance. I am healthier, more active and of happier countenance. I possess boundless energy and seldom tire.

Since my return from Hunza, I have drastically decreased my intake of cooked foods. In their place I am consuming as much as possible (depending upon my ability to make the change) of natural, unprocessed, uncooked foods. Today I say that the only excuse for eating cooked foods is that they taste good or have a nicer flavor and are pleasant and appetizing. But I do not believe any food is nutritionally improved by cooking, baking, frying or roasting. Again I repeat, you may improve its palatability, its flavor, its taste and its succulence . . . but you have positively not improved it nutritionally.

I believe that I can live to be 100 years old if I care to live that long . . . and if the good Lord is willing . . . by following the lessons learned in Hunza.

"If you are convinced that there are so many benefits in following the ways of the people of Hunza to health, why don't you start a crusade?"

Well, let's be sensible. Mrs. Lorimer did a very nice delineation on the people of Hunza in her writings. McCarrison did a terrific piece of work in showing people how, by following the health habits of the people of Hunza, they could maintain or regain their health. So did Wrench and J. I. Rodale, Unruh and others. But only a small segment of the people of the world—even among those who have read the books—followed the principles. What makes you think they would follow my admonitions and advice, any more than they did those capable illustrious ones who wrote before me? I

am not a do-gooder or a crusader! Compliment me if you wish, and say I am Socratic in my efforts!

I'm pleased to have the opportunity to present the situation before you. If you believe that I can be trusted and that I am telling you the truth, then you can also maintain or regain health and live to a ripe old age . . . by following the simple, natural laws that are part of the Hunzan way of life.

I, today, believe that the chief reason for the people of the West not adopting and taking up the Hunzan way of life is because it's too much trouble. Since my return from Hunza, my wife complains that she has a lot more work to do in the kitchen than ever before. For example, I used to love soups. So she'd take all the vegetables she could lay her hands on, including barley, rice and cabbage . . . and either cut or uncut, she'd throw them all into the big stewing kettle, put in some salt and pepper, a chunk of meat or a bone . . . and a few hours later we'd have a big kettle of soup—enough to eat for a couple of days. That's right!

Now she has to gather together (seldom does one shop have them all) at least a dozen kinds of vegetables . . . but better, 15 or 20 . . . slice them all up into small pieces or grate them as she often does, including potatoes, beets, turnips and spinach and incorporate them into my uncooked, raw salad. It takes her hours to do a really good job. But I demand uncooked foods . . . and salads are one of the answers.

Then to fruits . . . before she would put a can into the electric can opener, the top would come off and she'd dump the contents into a bowl and put it on the table . . . and there was fruit or fruit salad in one and a half minutes flat from can to platter. Now I demand at least 12 different kinds of unprocessed fruits in my fruit salad and she has to dice them up, slice them or cut

them and it must be made fresh all the time. She says if I want to eat like a monkey, I should go to the zoo or into the jungle. I, in turn, tell her that the monkeys in the jungle wouldn't have any human being in their midst if they could avoid it.

But there it is, folks. To live like the people of Hunza would require a great effort and many changes in our habits. Perhaps now you can actually see what I mean. I can just visualize my wife, or yours, rubbing dried apricots in water to form a gruel, along with a bit of oatmeal or ground wheat that has been soaked from the night before. Sure, it's probably one of the healthiest meals in the world—but who's going to prepare it in the prescribed fashion in this modern day and age? Not your wife or mine, you can bet your boots!

In thinking back, I felt that there in Hunza was one place on the earth's remote vastness where man is not always challenging and fashioning nature to his own selfish liking. It is here that nature teaches a profound, abject lesson to all mankind. By seas of tumbling peaks and towering summits, she reminds him of his insignificance, lest he should get visions of his own grandeur.

Here, nature has truly marshalled her forces and has them piled willy-nilly, miles high, in a heap, so as to stagger even man's unsurmountable, egotistical opinion of his own powers.

Lest it be thought that I am making outlandish claims for the people of Hunza, I want to keep the record straight and in order. I don't know how you feel about figures and statistics . . . but it has been my experience that they usually reflect only that which the quoter of the statistics wants them to reflect.

If I go to a lecture or read a treatise, I want to be told or enlightened concerning the pros and cons of the topic. I, for example, judge a man's honesty as much

by what he omits as by what he states. In this instance I am somewhat on the spot. I don't want to fall prey to the errors and omissions which I have condemned in others. I did pointedly seek and ask details concerning the ailments of the people of Hunza. I did seek to find out the diseases that are unknown in Hunza. I also wanted to learn the diseases that are most common and that generally affect the health of the people. And here is the picture.

They have trouble with their eyes. They suffer from stomach disorders—chiefly dysentery and worms. They are subject to skin infections, fevers, weak lungs, goiter and dental caries. Whether or not you wish to attach any great importance to the maladies I have outlined above, I feel that I should explain one or two of the contributing factors.

Remember, the Hunza homes do not have chimneys. Besides, they have so little fuel that they don't want to waste any of the heat . . . and the smoke is allowed to escape only through a hole in the roof. I don't know if this affects their lungs. It probably would. But I know that it does cause most of the eye ailments.

Concerning stomach disorders, it may be possible that the ingestion of continuous quantities of mineral laden glacial waters contribute to this condition . . . but I am unable to state categorically if this is true.

Goiter and caries of the teeth have become a leading health problem. But these conditions were comparatively unknown when they used their native salt.

All through my travels in that area I did not come across one sick native. But that need not have any great significance, because sick people probably stay out of sight, and therefore they wouldn't come within range of my vision or my wanderings.

I must emphasize here that every man that I saw in

Hunza appeared to be the picture of health and contentment.

Since my return from Hunza I have become noticeably health-conscious. And I have been appalled by the number of sick, ill and ailing people around me. It is becoming rare and unusual to meet a person who will boldly say that he is in perfect health at 35 or 40 years of age. And is there a large mature-membered family about, who doesn't have one of its members ill, dying or dead from one of our many dread diseases?

No, I resent any insinuation on the part of anyone to the effect that I am overdramatizing or accentuating the picture or situation. I believe that every community in America has had additions or new hospitals built, and even with all that, they are unable to take care of the applicants who desire to enter them as patients.

No wonder people are interested in the "Healthy Hunzans."

Taking all factors under close observation and consideration, I have reached the conclusion that ours is a condition of ill health and that the people of Hunza enjoy good health. Whether it is due to their way of life, as compared to our manner of living, depends entirely upon what you are willing to accept. It is my conviction that we can enjoy the same health that the people of Hunza enjoy if we will live according to the rules and laws of nature—right here in America!

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